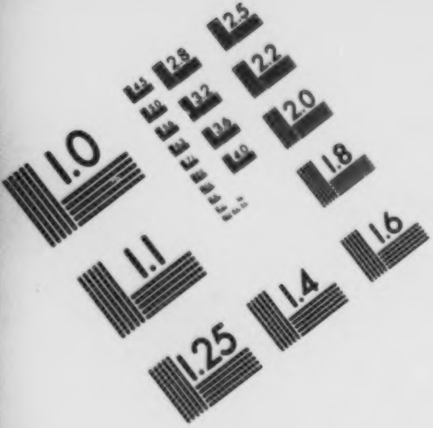
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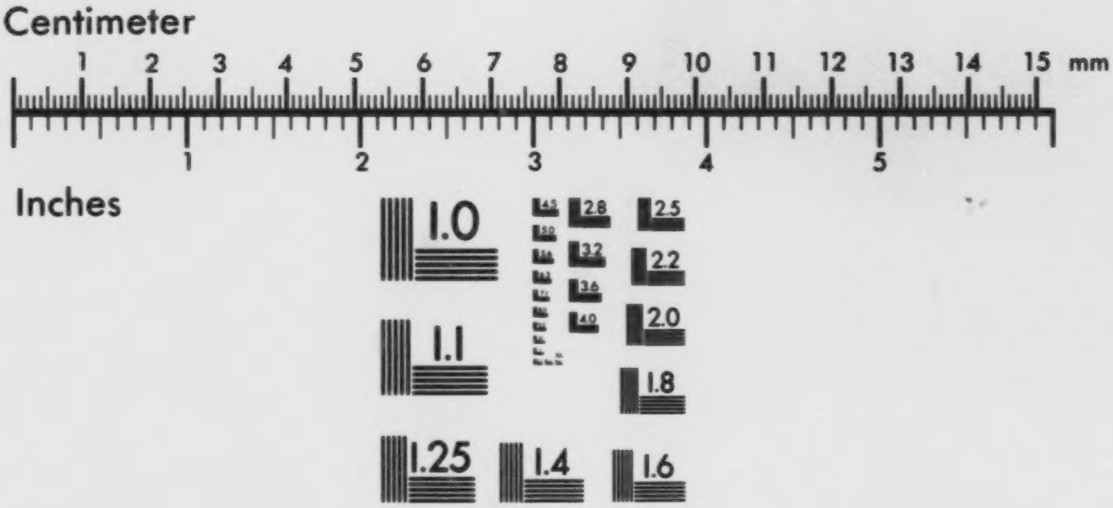
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ABSTRACT

Three studies are presented which explore the perceptions of New Zealand mainstreamed secondary students who are visually impaired and those of their parents and teachers. The three case studies examine services provided by the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind via: (1) advisory/itinerant support within the Auckland metropolitan area; (2) an advisory service within the provinces of Auckland, Northland, Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay, Gisborne, and Nelson; and (3) a Visual Resource Room attached to Manurewa High School (Auckland). The first three chapters discuss methods of supporting students with visual impairments, issues in mainstreaming, and objectives and scope of the study. The study sought to analyze: the availability and appropriateness of mainstream school placements and support services, back-up resources, materials, and equipment; the range and level of difficulty of subject offerings; appropriateness of teaching strategies, difficulties encountered, and support offered to subject teachers; academic and emotional support available for both students and parents; level of competence required by teachers; meeting the social development needs of students; service improvement; and the future. Appendixes contain copies of the interview forms used with students, parents, cooperating teachers, subject teachers, and visual resource staff. Other appendixes contain a rationale and proposal for a visual resource center. (Approximately 50 references.) (JDD)

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MAINSTREAMING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Patricia O'Brien

Studies in Education Series, No. 49

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CHAPTER 1

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

The Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind was established in 1890 and is now nearly 100 years old. Throughout its history, it has developed a range of services for children and adults who are visually impaired. The Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind is not the only provider of educational services. The task is shared with the Department of Education.

The Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind is responsible for providing the residential special school, Homai College, situated in Manurewa, for students with visual impairments who live throughout New Zealand and an advisory itinerant service for students registered with the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind and who are enrolled in any educational facility in the areas of Northland, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Gisborne and Nelson.

The Education Department through its Education Boards has been responsible for providing both itinerant and school-based services in the Hamilton area and likewise throughout the South Island with the exception of the Nelson area. At the time of the survey, the Education Boards were running services from a number of Visual Resource Centres located in Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin (Department of Education, 1987a).

The separate lines of control for the facilities run by the Education Boards have worked against the development of a cohesive national plan for the education of students with visual impairments within New Zealand. Inevitably this has led to gaps and duplication in the services for the school-aged students with visual impairments (Pole, Rogerson, Gibbs and Hornby, 1987).

The present project looked only at the services provided by the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind. Those provided by the Department of Education were not part of the study. To have included both services would have expanded the scope of the project beyond what could be completed by one researcher within the time of the fellowship.

Definition of Visual Impairment

The term "visual impairment" has been most commonly used to refer to children and adults who are "blind" or "partially sighted" (Hodgson, 1985). Barraga (1976) has differentiated the term distinguishing three distinct types of vision. The first is "blind" indicating that an individual has no vision or only light perception and learns through braille; the second is "low vision" where the person has problems in distance vision and can only see things within a range of inches or a maximum of two feet: and, thirdly, "limited vision" which refers to individuals who have sight when their vision is corrected.

Technical definitions reflecting the level of visual acuity have also differentiated individuals who are blind from those who are partially sighted. Legally blind individuals are those whose "visual acuity is 20/200 less in the better eye with the best possible correction or whose field of vision is restricted to an angle subtending an arc of 20 degrees or less" (American Foundation for the Blind, Berdine & Blackhurst, 1985, p.244) whereas partially sighted individuals are those "whose visual acuity is between 20/200 and 20/70 in the better eye with the best possible correction or those who in the opinion of an eye specialist need either temporary or permanent special education facilities". (Berndine & Blackhurst, 1985, p.244).

Within educational settings however, technical definitions have been replaced by those that indicate the medium through which students learn (Bateman, 1967; Gilmour, 1986). According to Gilmour, "The blind student is one whose visual loss indicates that he or she uses braille plus tactile and auditory materials whilst the partially sighted student is one who has sufficient visual acuity to use print" (p.3).

A broader definition of visual impairment that has recently been used in studies of mainstreaming within New Zealand (Norman, Sritheran, Ridding, 1984; Mitchell, 1985) reads, "visually impaired children are those who suffer from some eye defect or disease which limits their activity and requires special provisions or consideration at school" (Mitchell, 1985, p.6).

The Concept of Placement Options

In describing services for students who are visually impaired in the USA, Ward (1979) Hatlen (1980) and Kirk & Gallagher (1983) have all described a continuum of placement options with decreasing degrees of assistance from the most to least restrictive form of mainstream placement. The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (USA Public Law 94-142) ruled that students be placed at the level considered to be least restrictive in terms of the amount of assistance considered necessary to meet their special needs.

At the most restrictive end of the continuum is the special school or special class setting. In Hatlen's model (1980) the next least restrictive provision is what he has referred to as the cooperative plan where students from the special facility are also enrolled for varying lengths of time in a neighbouring regular school programme. Often the programme is of a social nature. Moving along the continuum is the resource room which is considered to be less restrictive than the cooperative plan as students are enrolled in the regular school programme but gain assistance and resources from the specialist staff in a visual resource room. Visiting teachers are found at the next two higher levels of the continuum. The itinerant teacher frequently visits and works with the student in a regular setting, whereas the consultant teacher works with the staff in planning appropriate programmes for the student. At the pinnacle of the continuum of services is enrolment of the student in a regular school without any specialised assistance.

Both Ward (1979) and Hatlen (1980) have omitted a further restrictive form of educational setting for students when outlining their respective continuums of services. This provision is that of a residential special school setting. Orlanzky (1982) in appraising Ward's continuum has commented that at any level residential special school students may be integrated for a full or part-time programme. Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington (1977) have outlined a similar range of residential and peripatetic services for students with visual impairments in the United Kingdom and Hegarty, Pocklington and Lucas (1982) have described a visual resource area as opposed to a visual resources room. Within the visual resource area model specialist staff work with the students with visual impairments in their regular classrooms only withdrawing them into the visual resource area for intensified one-to-one instruction. The specialist staff are seen as full members of the teaching team working with groups of non-disabled students as well as those who are visually impaired.

Placement Options for Students with Visual Impairments in New Zealand

Placement options for students with visual impairments registered with the Foundation constitute a continuum of services. There are five levels with decreasing amounts of specialised assistance being made available as the individual moves up through the cascade of services (Deno, 1970). (See

Figure 1.1)

Within the Royal New Zealand Foundation Blind model the greatest support and assistance is offered at Level 5 where students attend Homai College, a residential school providing students with a small pupil:teacher ratio and specialised material and resources to enhance their classroom based-programmes.

Visual resource rooms at Level 4 are found in regular intermediate and secondary schools situated near Homai College. Specialised staff from Homai College are attached to these rooms and provide students who have visual impairments, many of whom live at Homai College, with skilled instruction and back-up resources. Within the intermediate school, students are fully or partially integrated into the regular classroom depending upon their needs, whilst at the secondary level, students are fully enrolled in the regular school programmes. At both the intermediate and secondary levels visual resource rooms are used as a base for specialised support, resources and equipment.

The itinerant service at Level 3 is run by the Auckland Visual Resource Centre, Homai College and provides for students with visual impairments in schools throughout Auckland who require regular specialised instructional sessions. A specialist teacher, depending upon the needs of the student and the staffing of the service, may visit the school up to twice weekly. Staff contact and discussion are also integral parts of this visiting teaching service.

In contrast the Advisory Service staff (Level 2) visit students and teachers on an average only once a term to discuss problems, needs and progress. The Advisory Service is run by the National Advisory Service, Homai College and covers both Auckland and country areas. The adviser within the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind model works with students as well as with staff and in this respect the role is different from that of a consultant teacher in the United States whose role is one of offering only staff support (Ward, 1979; Hatlen, 1980).

Level 1	Regular class placement. No assistance.
Level 2	Advisory Visiting Teacher Service. Adviser visits student and staff and parents once a term or more.
Level 3	Itinerant Visiting Teacher Service. Itinerant instructs student twice weekly or fortnightly.
Level 4	Visual Resource Rooms. Visual resource teachers located in students schools.
Level 5	Residential Special School. Specialist staff work daily with students.

FIGURE 1.1

Cascade of Educational Services Offered by RNZFB

Itinerant Teachers of the Visually Impaired

What does the itinerant teacher do? The role of the itinerant teacher for students with visual impairments is multi-faceted. Responsibilities identified by Orlansky (1982) include provision and servicing of braille and print resources, direct instruction of students, student and parent counselling, teacher in-service training, participation in the planning and evaluation of programmes and acting as a liaison for the student with other professionals. Evans (1981) has stressed the need for the itinerant teacher to be able to cope with the isolation of the role. The skills that he has outlined as necessary to cope effectively include those required to counsel parents and act as a mediator between the students, their family and the whole staff. The more basic skills of writing reports based on observation and assessment and those required to act as an advocate for the student are also mentioned.

The Regular Classroom Teacher

With the increasing trend to mainstream students with visual impairments the role of the regular classroom teacher as opposed to the specialist teacher has needed to be defined. Orlansky (1980) has outlined the role as encompassing major responsibility for the day-to-day programme for the student; facilitating the student with a visual impairment into the life and activities of the classroom; planning educational goals and programmes and communicating with teachers. Similarly Awad and Wise (1984) have seen the inclusion of a blind student into the regular classroom as creating added responsibilities for the classroom teacher. These have included having conferences with the blind student, his or her parents, resource personnel and the administrators to develop appropriate instructional methods and to determine and order appropriate resources and equipment. Arranging for brailling and enlargement of materials several weeks in advance was stressed, as was the use of a sighted buddy system to help the student by verbalising the explanation of diagrams, maps and films. Apart from new tasks challenging the regular classroom teacher Awad and Wise have also emphasised the need to treat the student in the same manner as the other students.

Hodgson (1985) has addressed the issue of the regular classroom teacher using alternative teaching strategies with students who have visual impairments. Although the strategies do not call for significant changes from normal teaching techniques Hodgson has stressed the need for staff to emphasise material which students can experience through sound and touch as well as the visual mode.

Hodgson has invited teachers to:

(i) verbalise anything that is written on the blackboard;

(ii) enlarge handouts;

(iii) arrange appropriate seating with light source behind;

(iv) to face the student when talking.

As lack of appropriate teaching strategies could restrain the progress of the student with a visual impairment, curriculum constraints could also operate for the student within a mainstreamed setting (Cropp, 1985). Lack of time by classroom teachers to prepare certain topics has often been accompanied by lack of appropriate equipment and braille and larger print materials. Cropp has seen the secondary school environment as creating its own difficulties for, in comparison with the primary area where the major responsibility for the student has been with one teacher, at the secondary level the student has required a larger group of subject teachers to have expertise in working with students who are visually impaired.

Summary:

1. The Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, the Department of Education, and the Education Boards, share the responsibility of educational provision for students with visual impairments throughout New Zealand (Havill, 1972; Pole et al., 1987).

2. Visual impairment within educational settings has been defined in terms of the way students learn. Put simply, blind students are those who use braille and partially sighted, those who use print materials (Bateman, 1967; Gilmour, 1986).

3. Educational services for students with visual impairments have been often organised along a continuum representing varying degrees of assistance within mainstream settings (Hatlen, 1980; Jamieson et al., 1977; Ward, 1979).

4. The role of the itinerant teacher for students with visual handicaps covers instructional assessment, programme planning, parent and student counselling and resource development (Evans, 1981; Orlansky, 1982).

5. The regular classroom teacher is expected to manage the day-to-day programme of the student, planning educational goals, appropriate modification to teaching style and content, whilst being available to facilitate communication between the student, parents, teachers and administrators (Awad and Wise, 1984; Orlansky, 1982).

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CHAPTER 2

ISSUES IN MAINSTREAMING

This chapter will review issues arising from mainstreaming.

Concerns of Teachers

In 1980 Cicchelli and Ashby-Davis (1986) began collecting information from over 600 teachers who were experiencing the change over to mainstreaming in the USA. The major concerns expressed by teachers were to understand the responsibilities of their new role; to develop new and to modify existing instructional strategies and to develop the right attitudes to change for exceptional students.

More specifically related to students with visual impairments Martin and Hoben (1977) found that teachers were concerned about gaining the extra time required for the student to undertake tasks; how to develop the student's self concept and how to ensure a realistic achievement level for students whilst developing their independence. Similar concerns were expressed by New Zealand primary school teachers (Norman et al., 1984) towards working with students with visual impairments. Lack of time to prepare special programmes was raised, although running counter to this was concern about singling out the student with individualised programmes. Further, when asked to rank in order of importance the help needed to work with a student who was visually impaired in a mainstream setting the first priority was provision of materials, secondly gaining help from people within the school and finally inservice training. Such priorities raise what Mitchell and Mitchell (1987) have described as a moral dilemma for educationists in relation to mainstreaming. Put succinctly the moral dilemma raises the question; should students be accepted into regular schools without appropriate materials and back-up resources? The Post Primary Teachers Association (1985) has voiced its opinion, stating that lack of appropriate materials and back-up resources will be a major obstacle to the success of mainstreaming. Lack of alternative teaching strategies and specialised materials to supplement curriculum content could restrain the success of mainstreaming students with visual impairments (Hodgson, 1985; Cropp 1985).

Similarly Cropp (1985) and Hodgson (1985), have expressed concern that lack of alternative teaching strategies and specialised materials to supplement curriculum content could restrain the success of mainstreaming students with visual impairments.

Social Aspects of Mainstreaming

In addressing the efficacy of different forms of placement for secondary school students with visual impairments, Lansink (1984) has opted for a high school with a visual resource room in close proximity to a Special School for the visually impaired. He has argued that liaison between the two facilities provides greater access to specialised services and equipment for students in the mainstream school. An equally important aspect of Lansink's rationale, however, has been that attending a school with a Visual Resource Room will enable the student to mix socially with a balance of both sighted and non-sighted friends. In strong contrast have been the viewpoints of those supporters of mainstreaming who have seen one of its greatest advantages as increasing the opportunities for students to observe and participate with non-disabled peers (Asher 1978; Ferguson, 1965; Hartup and Lougee, 1975).

Ellehammer Anderson and Holstein (1981) argued that integration has led to pedagogical assimilation but not true integration. From interviews with blind and sighted students who had gone to the same schools in Denmark they concluded that although instruction for blind students may parallel that of their sighted peers, the social development needs of the blind students were poorly met. In contrast, Orkan-Leckan (1978) when comparing the adjustment of blind students educated in regular schools living at home, with those from residential education centres, found that the level of acceptance and adjustment to disability was greater for those educated in the integrated settings.

In terms of the effects on other students and teachers of having a student with a visual impairment in the classroom, Norman et al. (1984) have found that the majority of primary teachers have viewed the effects as, "mostly favourable" to "all favourable". Scheffers (1977) and Siperstein (1980) have both found that students of primary age felt better about students who are blind following a series of lessons designed to improve attitudes. Further, in relation to teachers, Keilbaugh (1977) surveyed elementary school teachers and found that slightly more positive attitudes existed where teachers had previous exposure to special education and students who were visually impaired.

In-service Training

Hatlin (1978) and Spungin (1980) stressed the need for in-service training for personnel working in the mainstream with students who are visually impaired. A recent survey (Pole, 1985) of both primary and secondary teachers throughout New Zealand, who had a student with a visual impairment in their classes, showed that a large majority of teachers had had no training for working with these students and a substantial group considered that they would have benefited from a short special education course at the preservice level. Similarly, the sizeable group of the primary school teachers in New Zealand surveyed by Norman et al. (1984) favoured both compulsory pre-service and in-service training as a means of understanding the needs of students with special needs.

Factors in Successful Mainstreaming

Salend (1984) discussed several factors necessary for the implementation of successful mainstreaming. These included: the development of a set of competencies and skills that the student needs to possess prior to being mainstreamed; preparation of the non-handicapped students to receive the mainstreamed student; promotion of communication between educators; evaluating student progress and provision of in-service training. More recently Bishop (1986) described the results of a study in which he collected information from students who were visually handicapped, their teachers, parents and school administrators as to the factors most important in mainstreaming students with visual impairments. The factors to emerge were a flexible teacher; peer acceptance and interaction; social skills; academic achievement; positive self-image; independence; family acceptance; inner motivation; available support personnel and adequate optical supplies and equipment.

Summary

Several issues surrounding mainstreaming have been briefly explored to isolate the factors which others have thought necessary to ensure successful mainstreaming.

1. Concerns of teachers, related to working with students with visual impairments, included lack of time to prepare curriculum and resource materials; how to ensure success for students without drawing undue attention to them; the need for in-service training; and how to gain back-up resources (Martin and Hoben, 1977; Norman et al., 1984).

2. Opposing viewpoints have been shown to exist regarding the social advantages of mainstreaming for students with visual impairments. Ellehammer Anderson and Holstein (1981) found that the social development needs of the students were poorly met, whereas Orkan-Leckan (1978) reported that level of adjustment for integrated students was higher than for those from segregated educational settings. Lansink (1984) favoured the Visual Resource option over mainstreamed high school placement as promoting a more balanced friendship group of sighted and non-sighted friends for students with visual impairments.

3. Factors identified by Bishop (1986) as leading to successful mainstreaming for students with visual impairments were: a flexible teacher, peer acceptance, social skills, academic achievement, positive self-image, independence, family acceptance, inner motivation, available support services, equipment and personnel.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

An advisory committee (see Appendix A) was set up and first met at the Auckland College of Education in May 1986. Following two meetings of the committee the purpose of the project was clarified as,

> *An exploration of the ways in which secondary school students with visual impairments, their parents and teachers were gaining support and services within mainstream settings staffed and organised by the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind.*

It was also agreed that the project should assess the attitudes of the three groups of people, students, parents and teachers to the concept of

(a) mainstreaming and their associated concerns and expectations for

(b) future improvements and change to the present services.

The Committee believed that an evaluation of the services of the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind seemed timely because of a review of the services of Homai College, planned for 1986. The results of the study could therefore be used to supplement, verify or refute its recommendations in view of the announcement by the Department of Education (Department of Education, 1987b) that within the next decade it aimed "to implement as fully as possible the current policy of educating students who have special teaching needs in the mainstream of regular education" (p.209). A study of mainstreaming as it affects students with visual impairments in New Zealand was therefore appropriate.

More specifically relating to the needs of students with visual impairments and emphasising the relevance and urgency of such an investigation was the plan outlined in the draft review of special education (Department of Education, 1987a) which had indicated that the services of

Homai College were under discussion with a view to being decentralised and with additional resource centres being developed to continue the longstanding movement towards mainstreaming of all students who have visual impairments throughout New Zealand.

Objectives of the Project

Because three groups of people are primarily affected by a policy of mainstreaming, the purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of secondary school students with visual impairments, enrolled in mainstream facilities, and those of their parents and teachers toward:

(a) *The availability and appropriateness of mainstream school placements, and their specialised support services, back-up resources, materials and equipment.*

(b) *The range and level of difficulty of subject offerings.*

(c) *Appropriateness of teaching strategies, difficulties encountered and level of support offered to subject teachers.*

(d) *Academic and emotional support available for both students and parents.*

(e) *Level of competence required by teachers to work successfully with students who are visually impaired and their associated needs for inservice training.*

(f) *How schools meet the social development needs of students who are visually impaired.*

(g) *How services could be improved.*

(h) *The future.*

Scope of the Project

As noted earlier in this report, the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind provides a Visual Resource Room attached to Manurewa High School, Manurewa, Auckland: an itinerant service for students within the Auckland metropolitan area; and an advisory service for students within the provinces of Auckland, Northland, Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay, Gisborne and Nelson for secondary school students with visual impairments.

Consideration was given to comparing the three services (visual resource room, itinerant, and advisory) but owing to the disparate types of visual impairment and the numbers of students serviced by each, the differing roles of each service and their varying student-teacher ratios, a comparative study was not implemented. Instead, the investigation consisted of three separate studies using either survey or case study formats. The sample and methodology and results of the first study are outlined first, followed by similar descriptions of studies two and three. A concluding chapter offers overall recommendations for change.

CHAPTER 4

MAINSTREAMING WITH ADVISORY/ITINERANT SUPPORT : STUDY ONE

The first study was orientated to gaining the perceptions of students, parents and teachers to mainstream placements within the Auckland area where students with visual impairment were supported by either,

The Itinerant Service, Homai College; or,

the *National Advisory Service*, Homai College.

At the time of the study the *Itinerant Service* was staffed by two teachers who visited a network of schools within the Auckland area. A student had to be registered with Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind to receive the itinerant service. Thirty-one students were enrolled with the service across the primary, intermediate, secondary and special school areas. The teachers visited the students at varying intervals, from twice a week to twice a term. One teacher had a caseload of 17 students, the other 14.

At the time of the study the *National Advisory Service* was staffed by three advisers who were experienced teachers of students with visual impairments. One teacher was designated the National Adviser. Students enrolled with the service were located throughout the following areas - Auckland, Northland, Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay, Gisborne, and Nelson. The service operated across primary, intermediate, secondary, tertiary and special areas of the education system and the students had to be registered with the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind in order to receive the services. The adviser:student ratio was 1:85 and advisers travelled from Auckland twice a year to visit students within the country areas. Within Auckland the advisers aimed to see students at least once a term.

The intensity of the student's needs determined whether the student was to be on the itinerant or the advisory roll. The advisory staff were responsible for following up all initial referrals and determining the appropriate level and type of support. Those with the greatest need were enrolled with the itinerant service.

The Sample

The Students

Twenty-three students with visual impairments who attended secondary schools within the Auckland area participated in the study. Seventeen of the students were female, 5 male and their ages ranged from 14 to 18 years. Thirteen of the students were enrolled in Form 4, 5 in Form 5 and 5 in Form 6. In two cases, 2 students were enrolled at the same school.

The Parents

Parents of 21 the 23 students participated in the study. The parents of 2 students were overseas at the time of the study. In 18 instances the mother was interviewed and in 3, both parents participated.

The Coordinating Teachers

Twenty-one coordinating teachers representing the 23 students participated. Twelve were female and 9 male. Nine teachers were guidance counsellors, 4 held the position of Dean, 4 of form teacher, 1 was a senior mistress, another an assistant teacher and two held positions of responsibility. Their average age was 39 years and their average length of teaching service was 13 years. Only 4 reported taking relevant papers at university to teach in the area of special education and only one teacher had received any in-service training. This consisted of a half-day seminar at Homai College.

Selection of Subjects for the Sample

The total population of students who met the following criteria was selected. The student was required to:

(a) Have a visual impairment as defined for educational purposes

(b) Be registered with the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind.

(c) Be mainstreamed in an Auckland secondary school.

(d) Be either a fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh form student. Form 3 students were not included because they had been the subjects for the pilot study (see below).

(e) Be serviced by either the itinerant or advisory staff based at Homai College.

(f) Have been given permission by his/her parents to participate in the study.

The guidance of the National Adviser for Visually Handicapped Students, Homai College, was sought in locating and identifying the eligible students. The parents of these students were then asked to participate in the study and each school was also asked to identify a teacher who was responsible for the coordination of the student's programme. This teacher was then approached by the researcher to participate in the project.

Methodology

A pilot study (Gilmour, 1986) which used the same methodology but a Form 3 sample of students, their parents and coordinating teachers preceded the present study.

Interview Schedules

Parallel interview schedules containing both forced and open-ended questions were developed for the student, the parent and the coordinating teachers (see Appendices B, C, D).

The mainstream literature was used as a resource for appropriate questions and where appropriate some items were adapted to probe the needs of students who were visually impaired (Jenkinson, 1982, Norman et al., 1984; Watts et al., 1978).

Administration

Letters were sent to the parents and schools detailing the project and requesting their cooperation in the study. Contact was then made by telephone to arrange personal interviews at the convenience of the interviewees. Students, parents and coordinating teachers were interviewed individually.

All 23 students were interviewed at their local high school. Students were withdrawn from class and the average length of the interview was 44 minutes. On the same day, whilst visiting the high school the same interviewer met the coordinating teacher who was offered a copy of the interview schedule to refer to during his/her interview. This took approximately 40 minutes. Where possible, following the school interviews, the interviewer visited the parents at their house. Parents were also offered a copy of the interview schedule and the average length of interview was 40 minutes.

Interview Team

A team of four interviewers was trained by the researcher to participate in the study. All four interviewers were trained teachers undertaking the Education for the Visually Handicapped Course at the Auckland College of Education. Each interviewer was responsible for interviewing 5 students, their parents and the coordinating teachers. The researcher was responsible for 3 students and their associated interviews.

The interviews were conducted over two weeks preceded by three, three-hour training sessions. Following the completion of the interviews the members of the interview team worked with the researcher to code the completed schedules.

The results from this first study will now be presented.

CHAPTER 5

PLACEMENT AND REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Parents Views

Parents reported that all 21 students had been referred to their current secondary school from an intermediate school. In 2 cases this was directly from Manurewa Intermediate where their child had gained support from the Visual Resource Centre. Another child had attended the latter but had moved to a local intermediate school prior to secondary placement. Only 8 parents reported that their children had attended Homai College at any stage of their primary schooling.

Sixteen of the 21 parents said that they had had a choice over their child's present school placement. The range and frequency of choice are outlined in Table 5.1. Only 3 of the parents indicated a choice of two options.

TABLE 5.1

Parent Choice of Placement Options

Placement Option	N=21
Out of zone school	10
Manurewa High School	5
Private Schools	3
Local High School	1
No Option	5

Note : More than one option could be chosen

The table shows that out-of-zone schools were a popular option and the Manurewa High School which has a visual resource room attached was considered by only a quarter of the parents interviewed.

The majority of the parents did not consider Manurewa High School as a placement option because they believed that the Visual Resource Centre was for students more disabled than their own child and that it was needed only for students who were blind or had severe visual impairments. Problems of geographic location such as increased travel time or necessity to live away from home were also raised.

Parents were asked if they had gained any help in choosing a placement for their child. The majority of parents reported gaining support from their families whilst over half identified both their receiving and referring schools. Support from the itinerant and advisory services was received by half the sample and the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind was mentioned specifically by half of the parents.

Two-thirds of the parent sample reported satisfaction with their child's present placement. Four of the parents were 'fairly satisfied' and 2 were not satisfied. When asked 'to describe the differences between their child's present placement and what they would develop under ideal educational circumstances' only 8 of the parents responded and the major provision that they saw to be lacking was more specialist staff and facilities.

Student Satisfaction with Placement

Of the 23 students interviewed 19 reported that they were happy with their present placement. Only 8 of the students had ever considered changing schools and when asked 'where to' 6 wished to go to another high school. Reasons for this included to be with friends, to escape being teased, to be closer to home and to gain better facilities for one-to-one tuition.

When the 8 students who had attended Homai College throughout their primary schooling were asked what were the major differences between Homai and their present placement, their comments were both positive and negative. Homai College was seen to offer less academic challenge but also offered smaller classes and more teacher support.

Referral Procedures

All schools reported that the same procedures were used for enrolling students with visual impairments as were used for students without disabilities. Were schools satisfied with the referral information they received?

Co-ordinating teachers were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the information that accompanied the student. Over half of the teachers were satisfied and of those who were not, all asked for improved information on the student's visual condition and its implication for learning. An overview of the student's current and future needs including resource people and visual aids was mentioned by 2 teachers as was the need for immediate written information from Homai upon referral.

Parents were asked if high schools sought information from them on their child's visual condition. Only 8 of the parents reported that this occurred. Three parents wrote information down on the enrolment form, 3 gave information at a multi-disciplinary meeting and 2 at a parent interview.

Summary

1. The majority of parents were given a choice over the school placement for their adolescent child.

2. As an alternative option the function of Manurewa High School was not understood by approximately two-thirds of the parents who saw it as a place for students who were blind or had severe visual impairments.

3. A large majority of parents were supported by their families in choice of school. Fewer parents however felt supported by the itinerant/advisory service and Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind with respect to choice of school.

4. The majority of students were happy with their placement.

5. Approximately a third had attended Homai throughout their primary schooling and the majority of these students believed Homai offered less academic challenge but more teacher support.

6. Just over a half of schools reported being satisfied with information received at the time of referral of the student with a visual impairment.

7. In only one third of the schools did the co-ordinating teacher say that specialist assistance from the Advisory Service was given to the school at the time of referral of the student with a visual impairment.

8. Less than half the parents were asked to give additional information on the visual handicap of their child at the time of referral.

Recommendations

1. In order to assist both parents and students to make a well informed choice of placement options it is recommended that the social work staff of Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind and the itinerant/advisory staff, Homai College, support and inform parents of the range of placement options clarifying the role of the Visual Resource Room at Manurewa High School.

2. That as a matter of procedure upon referral or diagnosis a case conference be held where representatives of the school, advisory service, appropriate specialists, the student and the parents meet to discuss,

   (a) The educational needs of the student.

   (b) Assessment measures of both the academic levels and visual acuity of the student.

   (c) Appropriateness of the school placement to facilitate programming and resources appropriate to the needs of the student.

   (d) The initial programme to be reviewed quarterly, outlining back-up resources from Homai and the Foundation. The programme to include appropriate syllabuses, supplementary to the core subjects and specifically relating to the visual impairment of the student. Examples of such syllabuses are those of visual efficiency training, concept development and tactual training programmes.

CHAPTER 6

MAINSTREAMING IN OPERATION

Parents were asked to indicate which placement options outlined in Table 2 were the most likely to develop the set of listed characteristics. These characteristics included progress in learning, feelings of being a worthwhile person, participation in school activities, making friends and having good family relationships. The most popular choice for all behaviour characteristics was a local high school with support from visiting teachers. It is interesting to note, however, that when the number of parents who checked itinerant and advisory staff were not combined, the highest choice for making the 'best possible progress in learning' was the Visual Resource Centre placement. For every other characteristic when placements 2 and 3 were not combined, the advisory visiting staff was selected by a greater number of parents.

Similar to the parent's responses, the most popular placement chosen by students (see Table 6.1) to promote the listed characteristics was the local high school with visiting teacher support. Further when the itinerant and advisory categories were not combined advisory support was the most popular option with the exception of placement 'for the best possible progress in learning'. In keeping with the parent response the visual resource centre support had highest number of responses.

When the same questions (see Table 6.1) were put to the coordinating teachers the local high school with advisory visiting teacher support was the most popular option, although the responses for promoting learning favoured the support of a Visual Resource Centre.

TABLE 6.1

Mainstream Placement Preferences

Characteristic.	Local High No Support			Local High Visiting Itinerant/Advisory									Local High Visual Resource Room			No Difference		
	P* N=21	S* N=23	CT* N=21	P N=21			S N=23			CT N=21			P N=21	S N=23	CT N=21	P N=21	S N=23	CT N=21
					I*	A*		I	A		I	A						
Make the best possible progress in learning?	0	2	0	12	6	6	12	5	7	10	3	7	9	9	10	0	0	1
Develop feelings of being a worthwhile person?	2	2	2	13	4	9	16	3	13	15	7	8	4	3	3	2	2	1
Take part in school activities, clubs and sports.	1	6	2	14	6	8	10	0	10	12	4	8	2	5	2	4	2	5
Make friends.	4	7	4	10	3	7	9	0	9	9	2	7	2	3	3	5	4	5
Have good family relationships.	2	5	2	13	5	8	9	1	8	9	2	7	2	3	3	4	6	7

*P = Parent
*S = Student
*CT = Co-ordinating Teacher

*I = Itinerant
*A = Advisory

Overall the main conclusion was that while a greater number of parents, visually impaired students and their coordinating teachers would choose a local high school with advisory visiting teacher support to promote the 'social development of their child', a high school with a visual resource room would be chosen to promote 'academic growth'.

School Subjects

Students were asked to identify the subjects they were taking. Table 6.2 outlines the range of subjects across Forms 4, 5, and 6. With the exception of science all students in Form 4 were undertaking the major core subjects. The one student exempt from science spent that time gaining individual assistance from teachers in the deaf unit attached to the school. Apart from the core subjects the only other subject with high frequency of selection was physical education and health. Such a finding is very encouraging suggesting as it does that the visual impairment of the students was not used to exclude them from this subject. Choice of other subjects was spread across both commerce and the humanities, with the range reflecting both the differences in what schools offer and the varying number of subjects taken by the students. Average number of subjects taken was 6 per student.

As can be seen in Table 6.2, English, Maths, Science, Economics and History were the most popular subjects in Form 5. As in Form 4, languages attracted only a minority of students. English and Maths led the selection of subjects in Form 6 and once again languages were a minor option.

TABLE 6.2

Range of Subjects Taken by Students Across Forms IV, V, VI

FORM IV	%	N=13	FORM V	%	N=5	FORM VI	%	N=5
English	100	13	English	100	5	English	100	5
Maths	100	13	Maths	80	4	Maths	60	3
Social Studies	100	13	Science	80	4	Computer St.	60	3
Science	92	12	Economics	80	4	Physics	40	2
Phys.Ed. Health	92	12	History	60	3	Classical St.	40	2
Commerce & Economics	31	4	Accounting	20	1	Economics	40	2
Typing	23	3	French	20	1	Accounting	20	1
Home Ec.	23	3	Geography	20	1	Geography	20	1
Engineering	15	2	Typing	20	1	History	20	1
Japanese	15	2	Music	20	1	French	20	1
French	15	2				Tech. Drawing	20	1
Music	15	2				Design & Tech.	20	1
Art	15	2				Creative Write.	20	1
Tech. Drawing	8	1				Journalism	20	1
Comp. Studies	8	1						

A majority of parents reported that they were satisfied with the range of subjects that the students were taking. The 3 parents who were dissatisfied were asked to choose from a list of reasons why their adolescent children had not been given the opportunity to take other subjects. All identified the lack of teacher training and class size.

Students were asked if their visual impairment hindered the school from offering them certain subject areas. A small range of subjects was mentioned by a minority of students. These subjects included typing, technical drawing, technicrafts, economics, history, computer studies and biology.

All parents, students and coordinating teachers were asked to indicate 'which subjects had proved the most difficult?' Table 6.3 presents the four most difficult subject areas identified by the respective groups. Maths was the only subject common to all three categories of respondents, however a much larger percentage of students reported it than did parents and coordinating teachers. Science was identified by both parents and students. Just over one-quarter of the coordinating teachers saw the student with a visual impairment as experiencing global difficulties.

TABLE 6.3

Most Difficult Subjects Reported by Parents, Students and Coordinating Teachers

Parents (N=21)		Students (N=23)		Co-ord. Teachers (N=21)	
Subject	Frequency	Subject	Frequency	Subject	Frequency
Maths	6	Maths	12	General	5
English	4	Science	5	Maths	4
Science	4	Soc. St.	3	Geography	2
Phys. Ed	2	Physics	3	Accounting	2

All parents were asked if they considered if any of the items listed in Table 6.4 were reasons for subjects being difficult. The categories chosen most often by parents were their children's lack of ability or slowness owing to visual impairment. Reasons relating to teacher competencies were seen as secondary to the disability of the student.

TABLE 6.4

Parental Reasons for Subject Difficulty

Reason	Frequency N=21
X's lack of ability	12
Lack of ability on the part of the teacher to modify the curriculum	3
Lack of specialist aids, equipment	5
Lack of teacher training in how to teach subjects to the visually impaired	6
Lack of transcribed materials	6
X's slowness owing to visual impairment	8
Other	6

Students and coordinating teachers were asked to give reasons for the difficulty of subjects. The reasons given (see Table 6.5) reflected more technical problems in comparison with the difficulties perceived by the parents for their consideration. Over half the student group identified reading and note-taking from the blackboard and overhead projector as a reason for subject difficulty, whereas this was mentioned by less than a quarter of the coordinating teachers. Problems with reading the text and accuracy were reported by less than a quarter of each group. Of interest was that the difficulties mentioned were mutual to both groups and reflected instructional techniques and materials, not content.

TABLE 6.5

Student and Coordinating Teacher Reasons for Subject Difficulty

Difficulty	Student N=23	Coordinating Teachers N=21
Reading and note taking from the blackboard, overhead projector	12	5
Can't read text	3	2
Accuracy as it relates to note taking, instructions and experiments	4	3

Students were asked to identify the subjects that they found the easiest. A range of subjects was mentioned with English being identified by close to half of the students, followed by a minority of students pinpointing science, economics, and social studies.

When students were asked 'why subjects were easy', three responses were given. These included: half said that the subject was enjoyable, 4 mentioned it did not involve that much board work and 4 that the content was practical.

Ratings of Academic Ability

Parents were asked to rate their adolescent children's subject performance in comparison with other form members. A total of 101 subject ratings were made across the three forms. The rating categories for performance were: bottom 20%; below average; average; above average and top 20%. Performance in the majority of subjects was rated as average (52% (53)) with the next highest category being the top 20% (19% (19)). The rating categories of above average (18% (18)) and top 20% (19% (18)) cumulatively were 26% higher than that of the cumulative score of below average (7% (7)) and bottom 20% (4% (4)).

Students made ratings across 102 subjects and similar to the parents, the average rating was given to the highest number of subjects (42% (43)) with the above average (29% (30)) and top 20% (17% (17)) accounting for 46% of the subjects in comparison with only 26% of parent ratings. Below average (4%

(4)) and bottom 20% (8% (8)) gained 12% of the subject ratings.

Unlike parents and students, coordinating teachers were asked to give a global rating of student's academic ability. The majority of teachers reported the student to be in the average (33% (7)) to above average (38% (8)) categories.

Modification of Curriculum

Students were asked if there were any subjects where they did not follow the same curriculum as the other students. In response only 4 students reported that they followed a changed curriculum. In one case this related to being withdrawn for remedial assistance across most subjects. Another student mentioned geography where he was not required to construct maps and 3 students were not expected to play ball games within the physical education programme.

General Assistance Given to Students with Visual Impairments

Students were asked if there were any subject areas where they gained extra assistance. Eleven subject areas were identified (see Table 6.6) but the number of students gaining assistance per subject was low with 5 for maths, 4 for science and 4 for economics. All three subjects required interpretation of diagrams, and use of mathematical symbols. Of interest was that although over a half of the students reported maths as being the most difficult subject less than a quarter of the students reported receiving extra assistance with the subject.

TABLE 6.6

Number of Students receiving extra assistance in subject areas

Subject	N=21
Maths	5
Science	4
Economics	4
English	3
Social Studies	3
Accounting	2
French	1
Typing	1
History	1
Computer Studies	1
Classical Studies	1

In response to the question, 'which of the staff give you the most assistance?', students identified the teaching staff such as subject teachers and form teacher more often than they identified the Dean and the counselling staff. Students were also asked to identify which staff gave them the most assistance in academic as opposed to social problems. Eighty-three per cent (19) students responded that it was the subject teachers who gave them the most assistance academically, whereas 65 percent (15) of students responded that they did not require assistance for social problems.

Summary

1. Overall students were involved in a wide range of subjects with high enrolment in English, maths and science at forms 4 and 5 levels.

2. Language and visual arts subjects were taken by only a minority of students.

3. Both parents and students appear satisfied with the range of subjects offered.

4. Over half of the students identified maths as a difficult subject.

5. A smaller percentage of parents and coordinating teachers also saw maths as proving difficult.

6. Parents saw the reasons for subject difficulties as reflecting their students' lack of ability and slowness arising from their disability.

7. Students and teachers saw the major difficulty arising from inappropriate instructional techniques in relaying information from the blackboard or overhead projector to the student.

8. English was identified by close to half of the students as being the easiest subject.

9. The majority of students rated their subject ability as average or above (86%).

10. The majority of parents rated their student's subject ability as average or above (89%).

11. Coordinating teachers saw the majority of students academic achievement as falling in the average to above categories (85%).

12. The visual impairment of the greater majority of students did not lead to changes in the curriculum.

13. From within the school staff both the subject teachers and form teachers were seen to give more assistance than administrative or guidance staff.

14. Students were prepared to accept academic assistance from subject teachers but believed that that they did not require assistance with social problems.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that as subject teachers are viewed, by the student with a visual impairment, as a major resource in the schools they be made a target group for in-service training in instructional techniques appropriate for use with the students who are visually impaired.

CHAPTER 7

SPECIALIST STAFF AND RESOURCES

Parents were asked if their student gained help from any of a number of specialists. Twelve of the parents reported that their adolescent was visited by an adviser, 7 by an itinerant teacher, 5 by a social worker, 4 by a careers counsellor, 2 by a tutor, 3 by a teacher aide, and one parent reported that the student used the Transcription Department at Homai College. Such a finding indicated that, apart from the visiting teachers, assistance was limited.

When the records of both the advisory and itinerant staff were checked it was found that the parent reports of who visited their adolescent were incorrect. According to the National Advisory Centre records 18 of the students were visited by an adviser and 5 by an itinerant teacher. The role of the two types of teacher in the mind of the parent group obviously required clarification.

When parents were asked how often their adolescent was visited by the visiting teacher, the majority of parents (16) replied, 'once a term or less'. Parents were also asked to indicate how helpful was the specialist. The majority of the parents saw the specialist as helpful to most helpful. Only 5 parents viewed assistance as not helpful and 2 were unable to respond. Over half of the parents indicated that they would like more assistance.

Nineteen students reported that they gained specialised assistance from an adviser and 5 from an itinerant teacher. The advisory category was increased from 18 to 19 indicating that 1 student saw both an adviser and itinerant teacher. Table 7.1 outlines the areas of assistance that the students identified when asked how the specialist staff assisted them.

The major areas of assistance from the respective advisory and itinerant staff were checking on academic/social problems and the use and procurement of aids.

TABLE 7.1

Areas of Assistance Given by Advisory and Itinerant Staff

Area of Assistance	Adviser N=19	Itinerant N=5
Check on academic/ social problems	13	3
Check on use and procurement of aids	7	2
Exam concessions	3	0
Assistance not required	5	0

Students were then asked where they met the visiting teacher and half reported that they worked in the Guidance Counsellor's office, indicating that schools did not make any special provision for housing visiting staff.

When the coordinating teachers were asked how the advisory/itinerant teachers assisted the students close to half said emotional support was given, whilst approximately a quarter of the sample said they did not know. Other areas mentioned by 1 or 2 coordinators included assistance with academic problems, making opthalmological appointments and supplying visual aids.

Coordinators were also asked to describe how the itinerant/adviser assisted the student's teachers. Approximately half the sample replied that the visiting specialists did not interact with the student's teachers, but another half indicated that there was interaction on a one-to-one or staff meeting level.

Improving the Role of the Itinerant/Advisory Teacher

Parents, teachers and coordinators were asked how they would improve the service offered by the visiting teachers. Nine indicated that they would like the role of the itinerant/adviser to change. Suggestions for change included: more visits and reports to parents on what is happening, increased counselling of the student, more case conferences, and increased meetings with the student's teachers.

Over half of the parents had met their student's itinerant/advisory teacher and interaction ranged from telephone contact through to discussion of written reports and organisation of eye checks.

Over half of the coordinators thought that there should be increased communication between the visiting teachers and the subject teachers.

When students were asked how they would improve the visits of the itinerant/advisory teacher, 7 mentioned that they wanted to maintain a low profile and wished the visits of these teachers to cause no fuss. One student would prefer the visits to be at home and no student requested more regular visits.

Specialised Equipment and Services

Parents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the specialised equipment in the school. Under half (10) of the parents were satisfied. When asked to name equipment required, a small minority of parents mentioned the following: close circuit television; enlarged screen for the computer; electric typewriter; enlarged maps; a computer; a talking calculator.

Both students and coordinating teachers were asked to indicate which of the specialised equipment listed in Table 7.2 they used or had in the school. As there was only one blind student in the sample only one student and two schools reported using or having brailled materials. There was little evidence of enlarged materials being used and when both students and coordinators were asked what materials were desirable but unavailable enlarged handouts were mentioned by 7 of the coordinators and 8 of the students. Further, only 4 coordinators reported the use of enlarged texts whereas 8 said they would be desirable even though unavailable.

Closed circuit T.V. was reported by 10 of the coordinating teachers, but only 1 of the students acknowledged using the machines. This raises the issue of where equipment is located in high schools and the difficulty of transporting a closed circuit television from one room to another. Further there appeared to be a discrepancy over the reporting of portable typewriters with 7 of schools having them, but only 3 of students using them. Once again this may have related to their ease of portability.

TABLE 7.2

Equipment Used and Available In Schools

Equipment	Students N=23	Coord. Teachers N=21
Perkins brailler	1	2
Magnifiers	6	6
Personal Miniscope	13	-
Brailled texts	1	0
" " " reference books	1	1
" " " handouts and class notes	1	0
Brailled texts	1	0
Enlarged print texts	1	2
Enlarged reference books	1	1
Enlarged handouts and class notes	9	8
Enlarged tests	(not asked)	4
Cassette recorder and player	2	10
Talking calculator	2	1
Enlarged maps	3	0
Braille and print machine	1	-
Portable Typewriters	3	7
C.C. T.V.	1	10
Braille and print machine	1	4
Computer	0	2

Specialised Services

As with specialised equipment both students and coordinating teachers were asked to indicate what specialised services the schools offered. Eighty-one percent of the schools provided both musical instrument tuition and technicrafts, although only 10 and 11 of the students used the respective services. A further difference existed with Adapted Physical Education with 8 schools reporting its provision and only 3 students using it. Adapted Physical Education was not given a high need priority by students. Only 1 said he would use it if available.

When parents were asked 'what specialised services they would like increased at the school' more visits were mentioned by 6 and individual parents mentioned a small range of other services including photocopier enlarging facilities, career guidance, and one-to-one tuition from special needs teachers. The low response given by parents to increasing services at the school level may not have reflected satisfaction with the status quo but more probably, limited knowledge of the existence of other services.

Coordinating teachers were asked to indicate how their schools 'had adapted their environments to meet the needs of students who are visually impaired'. Few schools had made any adaptations to the environment to accommodate the student with a visual impairment. Only 3 schools had installed white boards and made extra space available for students' texts and 2 had cleared walkways and passages, installed new lighting and hand rails. No schools had brailled signs on doors or brailled resources in their libraries.

Summary

1. Over half of the parents would like more assistance from the visiting teachers for their adolescent child.

2. A majority of students perceived the role of the adviser/itinerant teacher as checking on both social and academic problems.

3. For over half the cases the Guidance Counsellors had to vacate their offices in order to provide a room for the visiting teacher to work in.

4. Close to half of the coordinating teachers saw the visiting teachers as providing emotional support for the student, although approximately one quarter of the sample were unclear of the visiting teacher's role.

5. Less than half of the coordinators reported that the visiting teachers interacted with the staff as opposed to the student.

6. Just over half of the parents had met with the teacher who visited their adolescent child.

7. Over half of the coordinators would like more interaction between subject teachers and the visiting teachers.

8. No student wanted to increase the number of visits from the advisory/itinerant teacher, and a third of students wished to maintain a low profile and avoid fuss associated with the visits.

9. Under half of the parents were satisfied with the level of specialised equipment in schools.

10. Students and coordinators respectively reported a limited amount of enlarged print texts and enlarged handouts and class notes.

11. Less than a fifth of the coordinators indicated that text materials were enlarged for the student with a visual impairment.

12. A high percentage of schools made both musical instrument tuition and technicrafts available to the student with a visual impairment.

13. With the exception of increased visits of itinerant/advisory staff the need for other types of specialised services was not emphasized by parents.

14. Very few schools had made any adaptation to the physical environment of the school to accommodate the visual impairment of the student.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

1. In order to increase communication about the role of the itinerant/advisory service, the needs of the student, their teachers and parents, it is recommended that:

    a The placement committee be reconvened once a term to overview the specialised needs and ongoing programme of the student.

    b That the convening of this committee be the responsibility of the school assisted by the staff of the advisory/itinerant service.

c That the committee membership change to meet the developing needs of the student but its core group be comprised of:

  - (i) the student
  - (ii) the parents or their representatives

  Representatives of:

  - (iii) the National Advisory Service
  - (iv) the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind e.g. Careers Counsellor, Social Worker
  - (v) the school staff
  - (vi) the Guidance Counsellor
  - (vii) friend of the student

d That the committee be chaired by a representative of the school staff.

e That the committee be known as a Resource and Support Committee.

2. That schools provide enlarged texts, reference materials, and class notes for students who are visually impaired.

3. That coordinating teachers work with the staff of their school and that of the National Advisory Service to arrange for the enlargement of such materials to the required letter size.

4. That photocopier enlarging facilities be installed in all secondary schools.

5. That National Advisory/Itinerant staff work with staffs of schools to increase their understanding of why enlarged reference and test materials are necessary.

6. That school administrations be encouraged to make their school buildings barrier free for students with visual impairments.

7. That National Advisory/Itinerant and school staffs discuss the optimum level of specialised equipment that schools can have for students with

visual impairments. Discussion to also clarify where equipment can be maintained and transported readily throughout schools.

8. That the Resource and Support Committee monitor the use and need for specialised equipment and services for the student with a visual impairment within and outside the school.

9. That schools be provided with technical guidance manuals on how to operate specialised equipment.

CHAPTER 8

SOCIAL LIFE

Students were asked a series of questions to probe the area of friendship. In rating the number of friends at school 18 of the students reported that they had several friends and 21 could name three of whom nearly all were sighted. However when the group was asked about a special friend at school only 12 students indicated that they had one.

The major friendship activity identified by 20 of the students was sitting around and talking. Seven reported that they played sport, and 6 reported walking around the school. Less popular activities included going to the library, doing homework and going to clubs. Fifteen of the students reported that there was no difficulty in making friends at school and over half the students (12) thought the responsibility of making friends was up to the person themselves and not the job of the school. A small percentage of students acknowledged, however, that schools could promote friendship through the following activities: sports; clubs; field trips; stable form groupings; counsellors and common room activities. Close to half of the students reported that they made friends by just talking to people. For 17 students school friendships extended outside of school hours with weekly contact.

Sixteen of the students had other friends who went to different schools and 11 of this group saw these friends weekly. Only a minority of 4 of the students reported that there were any difficulties in making friendships at home.

The most popular activities that students participated in with out of school friends were physical activities and outings (see Table 8.1). Sports, indoor games, and clubs, were of a lesser priority. As activities required more vision, their popularity lessened.

TABLE 8.1

Friendship Activities Within The Community

Activity	N=23
Physical activities e.g. bike riding	13
Outings, e.g. shopping	12
Listening to music	5
Talking	5
TV/video computer	4
Sports	2
Indoor games	2
Clubs/youth groups	2

Students were asked if 'their handicap limited their friendship in any way?' A minority of students thought that it had and the reasons included: the way they looked (4); inability to play sports (2); lack of tolerance from others (1); and limitations in non verbal behaviour (1).

When parents were asked what they considered to be the greatest difficulty for their adolescent in making friends, 6 commented that it was their quiet, shy personality which led to a lack of confidence to mix socially.

Although only 11 of parents were satisfied with the way the school promoted friendship very few could comment on how this could be improved. More sports training and social skills training were each mentioned by individual parents.

Parents and students were asked a similar set of questions in relation to friendship. Table 8.2 summarises how parental impressions of their adolescents' friendship patterns coincided with those of their children. The responses of twenty parents have been matched to those of their adolescents. Overall the perception of the parents agreed 74% of the time with that of the students. The area of highest agreement related to the question as to whether the adolescent brought friends home (95% (19)). For many of the other questions which related to friendship within the school the parent may not have had first-hand experience. The areas of lowest agreement were number of friends, frequency of contact with friends outside school and problems with making friends at school. In the first two areas where parents disagreed the majority indicated a lesser number of friends and lower frequency of contact whilst in the third, parents indicated greater difficulties at school than were indicated by their children.

TABLE 8.2

Parent and Adolescent Perceptions of Friendship

Issue	N=20 Parental	% Agreement	N=20 Parental	% Agreement
No. of friends	13	65	7	35
Naming 3 friends	14	70	6	30
Having a special friend	17	85	3	15
See school friends outside school	15	75	5	25
Frequency of contact outside school	12	60	8	40
Has friends in local area	15	75	5	25
Invites friends home	19	95	1	5
Problems making friends				
at school	13	65	7	35
at home	15	75	5	15
Total Responses	133	X = 74%	47	X = 26%

Parents, students and coordinating teachers were all asked to indicate the level of peer acceptance that operated for the student with a visual impairment. Categories of acceptance ranged from 'very good', 'good', 'O.K.', to 'not so good.' The majority of coordinators, parents and students gave a 'good' to 'very good' rating, although this only accounted for 69% of the student rating in comparison to that of the respective coordinator and parent ratings of 86% and 81%. This discrepancy is accounted for by 30% of the students reporting that their level of peer acceptance was only 'O.K.'

The same three groups were asked to indicate the level of personal adjustment they perceived for the student with a visual impairment. As with the category of peer acceptance the majority of the three groups rated the student's personal adjustment as 'good' to 'very good'. The highest percentage of this combined rating came from the coordinators followed by that of the students with the lowest being made by the parents.

Summary

1. The majority of students reported that they had several friends.

2. Just over half of the students reported having a special friend.

3. At school the major friendship activity identified by students was 'sitting around and talking'.

4. Fewer students experienced difficulty in making friends at home than at school.

5. Over half the students thought that making friends was the individual's responsibility and not the job of the schools.

6. A large number of students reported that they had friends in the local community and the majority saw these friends weekly.

7. The perceptions of the parents on the nature of their adolescent children's friendships substantially confirms the view of the adolescent.

8. Peer acceptance and personal adjustment for the student with a visual impairment was seen as falling into a middle range or above by the majority of parents, coordinators and students.

Recommendations

1. That schools be made aware of the difficulties in making friendships experienced by a minority of students who are visually impaired.

2. That schools make available for all students social skills training programmes.

CHAPTER 9

TEACHERS AND CONCLUSIONS

Teachers were asked to indicate from the list of characteristics what 'makes for a competent teacher of a student with a visual impairment?' Over 80% of the coordinating teachers believed that flexibility and training were important.

When students were asked 'to outline what makes for a good teacher of students like yourselves', two major characteristics emerged. The first indicated, that the teacher should be available, receptive and understanding (11) and the second that the teacher should go out of his/her way to give extra help (10). Of interest was that over a quarter of the students mentioned that the person should treat the student the same as other students and be low key and tactful.

Parents, teachers and students were all asked if 'they considered training necessary for teachers to work with students with visual impairments'. A larger majority of teachers (17) thought that training was necessary as did 16 parents with just over half the students (12) in agreement. All three groups were asked 'to identify areas to be covered in such training'. As can be seen from Table 9.1 an awareness of visual impairments and techniques to adapt teaching strategies was common to parents, teachers and students. Although a higher percentage of teachers thought inservice training was necessary only a quarter could make any specific suggestions.

Coordinating teachers were asked if schools 'did anything to help visually impaired students adjust to their impairment'. Only a few schools reported helping the student with adjustment to his/her visual impairment. Support mentioned was in the form of counselling from either the Guidance/Careers Counsellor (5) or from the subject teachers (1).

In terms of the attitude of staff towards the student with a visual impairment, 8 of the schools reported that staff were working on their own attitudes and in 5 of these cases this was through a staff meeting held to discuss a particular child. In relation to fellow students 9 of the schools reported strategies which included preparing classes to receive the student who is visually impaired and intervention by the Guidance Counsellor where antagonism was shown.

Teachers were also asked 'what makes for a popular student who is visually impaired'. A pleasant personality was a common characteristic to assist popularity with both teachers (17) and fellow students (11). A second common characteristic although mentioned by fewer teachers, was the ability of the student with a visual impairment not to dwell on his/her handicap. Five (5) of the teachers thought this aided popularity with students and (8) with staff. A third dimension, the ability to self-promote and have a go at things, was mentioned by 7 of the teachers in relation to staff and 8 in relation to fellow students

TABLE 9.1

Areas Identified as Requiring Inservice Training for Teachers

Areas	Parents N=21	Teachers N=21	Students N=23
Awareness about visual impairments	15	10	6
How to adapt teaching strategies	3	12	5
Knowledge about resources and support services	1	10	0
Awareness of emotional needs of student	0	4	3

Summary

1. Inservice training for teachers of students with visual impairment was thought necessary by most coordinating teachers, almost as many parents but only about half of the students.

2. Awareness of what constitutes a visual impairment and how to adapt teaching techniques were suggested areas for inservice training common to coordinating teachers, parents and students.

3. Few schools were actively involved in helping the student with a visual impairment to adjust to his/her disability.

4. A minority of schools reported activities to assist staff with their attitudes to the student who is visually impaired.

5. Less than half the schools reported activities to assist the student with a visual impairment by developing appropriate attitudes amongst sighted students.

6. Three common characteristics were identified by teachers as making the student with a visual impairment popular with both staff and fellow students. The first was a pleasant personality, secondly the ability of the student not to dwell on his/her disability and thirdly self-assertion and a willingness to have a go at things.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Homai College expand its in-service training role and work with Boards of Trustees to pinpoint and meet the training needs of secondary school staffs for working with students who are visually impaired.

2. Schools be encouraged to include social consciousness - raising programmes relating to disability in and throughout their curriculum.

3. Guidance Counsellors be given the opportunity to attend in-service training, promoted by the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, to be made aware of the social implications of being visually impaired.

4. That secondary school students who are visually impaired be given the opportunity within the school programmes to learn how to self promote through assertion skills training programmes.

5. That guidance counsellors be given the responsibility of organising social skills and assertion training courses for students with visual impairments within integrated groups.

Conclusions from Study One

Several needs have arisen throughout this first study and these include:

1. The need for those personnel who support the student with a visual impairment to meet regularly as a group to pinpoint and discuss the changing academic and social needs of the student. Such personnel would include the student, his or her parents, teachers, advisory/itinerant staff and other specialists appropriate to the needs of the student.

2. The need for increased communication between the advisory/itinerant staff with school staffs to facilitate appropriate use of resource materials and provision of equipment suitable for use with students who are visually impaired.

3. The need for in-service training for subject teachers.

4. The need for social skills training programmes to:

   (i) raise the sighted students' and teachers' consciousness to what it means to be disabled and

   (ii) train the student with a visual impairment to self advocate and to be assertive.

CHAPTER 10

A CASE STUDY OF A VISUAL RESOURCE ROOM :
STUDY TWO

The Visual Resource Room at Manurewa High School provides a support service for students with visual impairments who are enrolled at the school. As a means of exploring the nature of the service a case study strategy (Yin, 1984) was employed to address how the Visual Resource Room operated.

Several types of data were collected from different sources. The staff of the Visual Resource Room were interviewed with a series of open ended questions (see Appendix E). Students and parents were also interviewed using the same schedules as had been used in the first study. Questionnaires (see Appendix F) were also distributed to the teachers of any fourth form student who was receiving assistance from the Visual Resource Room. The questionnaire comprised 24 questions of both an open ended and forced nature. As with the interview schedules for the Auckland Study, the questionnaire items were developed using the studies of Watts et al. (1978); Jenkinson (1982); and Norman et al. (1984) as resources. The questionnaire had originally been trialled in the pilot study (Gilmour 1986) and modifications made accordingly.

The interviews of the students and their parents and the questionnaire returns from the subject teachers were used to verify the responses of the Visual Resource Room teachers. This meant that only the questions of the student and parent interviews and questionnaire returns relevant to those of the Visual Resource Room teachers interview schedule were coded. The questions used for verification are asterisked in Appendices B, C and F.

In order to conduct the interviews the researcher spent two weeks visiting the Visual Resource Room daily. Within this time she examined documents that related to the organisation of the room, observed the interaction of teachers with fellow staff and students and examined both visual resources, materials and equipment held in the room.

The Visual Resource Room is centrally located within the Manurewa High School which is situated within two kilometres of Homai College. The school had an enrolment of 18 students and a staff of 2 teachers. As well as a Visual Resource Room the school had an Experience Unit for secondary students who are slow learners.

The Visual Resource Room had an appointment of two Junior 1 teaching positions and five teacher aide hours per week. The teachers were officially on the Homai College staff schedule. At the time of the study one of the teachers had been released to undertake the Education for the Visually Handicapped Course at Auckland College of Education. Filling this position temporarily were two secondary trained teachers who shared the position. One worked for three days a week, the other for two days.

At the time of the study three of the 18 students were at Form 6 level, 7 at Form 5, 6 at Form 4, 1 at Form 3 and another student was enrolled in the Experience Unit.

For the purpose of the study only students who were enrolled across Forms 4, 5 and 6 were asked to participate. Of the 16 students eligible, 12 parents gave permission for their student to participate. However, owing to illness and unforeseen circumstances only 10 students were interviewed. Further, although all parents were willing to participate only 5 were available at the time of the interview. Interviewing parents was complicated by the fact that of 10 students interviewed, the residential address for six was outside of the Auckland area, with two students coming from the South Island.

Role of the Visual Resource Room (VRR) Staff

The staff of the Visual Resource Room saw the support they gave to the students with visual impairments who used their service as covering three major areas. The first related to the area of subject teaching, the second counselling and the third provision of visual aids and educational resources.

Subject Teaching

All three teachers reported that they gave assistance to students where back-up support was needed to clarify subject content that had been presented in class. This assistance was frequently in the form of one-to-one tutoring. Each student developed a Log Book with the Visual Resource Room staff where a record of the student's current assignments were listed. The Log Book was used by staff to continually overview the student's progress and his or her need for both back-up and remedial support.

Each of the staff members tutored across all subject areas, however, where possible they liked to use their special strengths. The speciality areas for the three staff were maths and music for the teacher in charge, geography and social studies for the second teacher and English and history for the third teacher.

Apart from back-up or remedial support, the Visual Resource Room staff was available to students doing correspondence courses. For example, the teacher in charge worked several times a week with a fifth form blind student who was taking music by correspondence. This was to enable the student to overcome problems associated with a time clash of subjects. Without the back-up support from the Visual Resource Room teacher the student would have had to drop one of the subjects.

The Visual Resource Room staff also assisted students having difficulty with a particular subject by accompanying them to the classroom and providing immediate interpretation of subject content. For example, the teacher in charge attended all fourth form Accounting classes to assist a blind student to set out her work in the correct columns.

Counselling

All three staff of the Visual Resource Room saw their role as giving support to the students. One teacher described herself as a 'confidante and friend' and another 'as a mother figure', particularly for those students living away from home.

Another form of counselling related to the organisation of the students' programmes and the amount of assistance they required from the Visual Resource Room staff. The teacher in charge outlined three types of assistance. These included:

(i) Students who take a full programme gaining back-up assistance in the Visual Resource Room in their free periods in the subject or subjects of most benefit to them.

(ii) Students who take a reduced programme and use the Visual Resource Room as a base to gain back-up support.

(iii) Students who are sent back to the Visual Resource Room throughout a class period by a subject teacher to work with Visual Resource Room staff on content or to have access to visual materials e.g., Closed Circuit Television.

Division of Resource Material and Visual Aids

Apart from a teaching/tutoring centre the Visual Resource Room was a clearing house for brailled and enlarged texts and reference materials for all subject areas across all forms. Within the Visual Resource Room there was a resource section where a file had been developed for each subject in which teacher handouts were kept to be distributed in the teaching session either in braille or enlarged print. The file also included relevant transcribed reference materials suitable for students to use when the relevant topics were covered in class.

Where suitable reference material was not held in the Visual Resource Room all staff spoke of the support they received from both the Homai library staff and Homai transcription department to locate and prepare materials. Frequently materials that were requested by the Visual Resource Room staff were ready for collection at Homai on the same day.

The Visual Resource Room teachers also acknowledged the value of the Manurewa High School library staff in assisting the students to locate materials. Often the Visual Resource Room staff would work with their students in the library. An example given by one of the staff illustrates this where a blind student was unable to locate suitable reference material on the topic, 'Social change and the role of women' within brailled encyclopaedias in the Visual Resource Room. The Visual Resource Room teacher assisted the student to find appropriate materials in the library, following which the teacher read sections from the materials to the student and the student brailled what was considered relevant. As another Visual Resource Room teacher said, 'I fill in the gaps for the student which transcription can provide'. This provision alternatively was provided by the Visual Resource Room teachers reading material onto tapes, which once again enabled students to braille what was needed.

The Visual Resource Room was well supplied with visual aids. These included a range of personalised aids for individual students such as portable typewriters, braillers, drawing kits, miniscopes. Larger pieces of equipment such as a closed circuit television system, optacon, a computer with voice synthesizer, and braille printer were all available. As part of their role all three teachers arranged to have equipment serviced, delivered and picked up from Homai.

Working More Effectively With Students

The teachers felt that they would like more time to tutor the students and suggested the appointment of a clerical aide which in turn would release them from some administrative and resource development work. The teacher in charge thought that going to class on a random basis to observe students would enable her to pinpoint more thoroughly difficulties being encountered. Once such were identified then the Visual Resource Room teacher could accompany the student for one or two sessions until the student felt comfortable with the topic.

One of the teachers thought her effectiveness was sometimes impaired by the students looking upon her as a helper and not 'as a real teacher'. A greater understanding of the role of the Visual Resource Room teacher by the students was thought necessary.

The assistance outlined by the group of students echoed that noted by the Visual Resource Room staff. Several of the students noted that the Visual Resource Room teachers gave them general help in checking all subjects. As one student said, 'if you don't understand something or want something read she helps me'. Two students commented on how the Visual Resource Room staff assisted them with explanation of maps, and maths diagrams. Reading test papers if subject teachers had not arranged brailling and reading and taking down notes were mentioned by 3 students. The range of assistance given is summed up by the following student:

> 'Mrs.... goes to accounting and she does what you do, she's learning it. I get help with any problems which are in my Log Book. I get help with speeches and assignments; Mrs.... took me to the print library for a history assignment and read me notes she took'.

A more succinct statement from another student was: 'If you need urgent help with maths they get you on the right track, get you books, take notes, read to you, organise tests and get books from Homai'.

In relation to social difficulties most of the student identified the Visual Resource Teacher as the person who gave them the most help with social difficulties. Three students said that they didn't 'talk to anybody at the school', and one student explained 'sighted people think we get special allowances, therefore it is better to go to the subject teachers.... I've learned things the hard way'.

Several of the students were happy with their present situation within the Visual Resource Room. One student however recommended a higher staff-student ratio and another would have liked access to the room's computer for study purposes on week nights. A major challenge identified by three students was how to lessen their need of the Visual Resource Room's services. As one student said, 'we want to be equal but we are compromised by having things done for us which leads us to be unequal'. Another student expressed his personal challenge as one that involved change to his lifestyle not to the resource room. He said, 'there's no need to improve the resource room. I need to improve my life and make better use of my sighted friends'.

In discussing the assistance that the Visual Resource Room staff gave them the students who were blind and partially sighted identified the areas of subject teaching as back-up or remedial support, counselling and provision of resource and visual aids. These areas in turn were all verified in conversations with the students who acknowledged gaining both academic and emotional support. The teachers felt that their effectiveness could be increased if they had more time to tutor students. Most of the students were satisfied with the extent of the Visual Resource Room services although a challenge identified by a small number of students was how to decrease their dependence upon them.

Working With Teachers

The teacher-in-charge saw her role as spanning the four areas assessment and placement of the student; solution of social problems associated with the student; provision of extra teaching resources; and teaching techniques appropriate for the student with a visual impairment, while the two job-sharing teachers reported working mainly in the provision of resources and teaching techniques.

The teacher-in-charge worked with the school staff in finding the most suitable placement for the student within the school. She reported using information from psychological reports, previous school reports and entrance tests e.g. TOSCA. Where necessary the support of Homai staff could be called upon to facilitate both educational and opthamological assessments. Placement was not only dependent upon the characteristics of the student but a match was sought between the teachers and the student and peers that would facilitate both social and academic growth.

The teacher-in-charge also emphasised her role as a social advocate for the students who used the visual resource room services. Often she was consulted by the school administration if a student was to be disciplined and commented that part of her role related to developing positive attitudes with teachers towards students with visual disabilities. She related a case where following consultation with her, the school administration, rather than suspend a student, gave the student time off to find a job.

All three teachers outlined how they assisted teachers to find alternatives if materials were not available in braille. For one teacher this meant 'keeping ears tuned to relevant radio and TV programmes, and making back-up notes to those already set'.

The need was also stressed to be constantly aware of what enlargements were required throughout each day for the student who was partially sighted to take to class. All three teachers, however, emphasised that Visual Resource Room staff were very dependent upon the cooperation of teachers to provide resources in advance of the teaching sessions if enlargements or brailled materials were to be made ready in time.

Teaching strategies often related to how to interpret diagrams, maps and symbols for the student. Alternatively, staff were consulted on how to provide suitable options to the set work. The teacher-in-charge outlined how after consultation with a teacher who was having problems working out how a blind student could submit a photographic essay on travel to school, the topic was changed to a sound essay on travel from school to the Homai Hostel.

The Visual Resource Room staff would like to increase the amount of time they spent with subject teachers. The teacher-in-charge would like more time to be available for consultation between subject teachers and the Visual Resource Room staff to explain and demonstrate how to teach certain abstract concepts, how to use blackboards and overhead projectors and whiteboards. Encouraging teachers to come into the Visual Resource Room and more informal interaction were suggested respectively by the other two teachers.

The type of assistance that the Form 4 teachers reported they gained from the Visual Resource Room staff verified their role as it related to the brailling of subject notes, texts and handouts. Twenty-two subject teachers returned the questionnaires distributed. Only one teacher reported having materials enlarged which was a consequence of the fact that there was only one partially sighted student at the fourth form level. Assistance with tests was also reported by several teachers. This included both the brailling of test papers and the reading of the questions by the Visual Resource Room staff to the student where teachers had failed to arrange for Visual Resource Staff to braille the paper in time. Three teachers reported encouragement by the Visual Resource Room staff of teaching strategies for the student with a visual impairment. One teacher summarised this assistance as receiving 'feedback on handling content at all times'.

Assistance with assignments, follow up and remedial work for students was noted by 4 teachers and alternatively 3 teachers commented that the Visual Resource Room staff would let them know if the student was having any difficulties. As one teacher wrote, the Visual Resource Room teacher 'advises me of any problems (the student) may be having and is too shy to tell me about'.

A final area reported by teachers was the way in which Visual Resource Room staff would discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the student. One teacher described the assistance as being 'advised about... capabilities, e.g., should I try to involve her in practical drama. They said I should, so I did, with much success'.

The following comments by two teachers give the flavour of the subject teachers' reaction to Visual Resource Room staff. They were 'ready and available to support me virtually at any time' and gave 'fine consultation at all times'.

When asked about ways in which their effectiveness in working with the resource teacher could be increased only a minority of teachers responded. Two teachers said they would have liked the Visual Resource Room teacher to visit the classroom to assist both themselves and the student. Similarly, another three teachers thought more time to interact with the Visual Resource Room staff would be beneficial. Specifically one teacher said he wished to 'learn about ways in which my classroom techniques can be changed to help... more'. In keeping with having more access to the Visual Resource Room teachers another subject teacher suggested that new staff make a compulsory visit to the Visual Resource Room within the first week of the first term to facilitate their 'coping with being confronted with a visually impaired student on day one'.

Overall the Visual Resource Room staff perspective on how they assisted teachers was confirmed by the subject teachers whose comments showed the Visual Resource teacher as one who provided them with needed resources and teaching strategies. The relationship between the two categories of teachers was one of consultation with the Visual Resource Room teacher providing if necessary one-to-one tutoring and back-up support for the student with a visual impairment. Although the Visual Resource Room teachers saw that increasing the effectiveness of their role meant spending more time instructing and interacting with subject teachers, the latter group indicated little change was required to improve their relationship.

Working With Parents

The teacher-in-charge reported 'an open door policy' where parents were free to call in at any time to discuss their student's progress and any problems or concerns they were encountering. Most of the teacher-parent interaction was handled by the teacher in charge owing to the part-time employment of the other two teachers. Other forms of contact with parents involved case conferences, and the use of progress and full school reports.

Case conferences were held on individual students and played a major role in determining the students' educational futures. At the time of the project a case conference was held to discuss if a Form 6 student should return for Form 7 or apply for a position in the 'Living Skills Programme' run by the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind. The conference was held at Homai College, chaired by the Deputy Principal and in attendance were the student, his parents, and the Visual Resource Room teacher. Following the student stating his ambivalence towards returning for Form 7, each person offered him his/her advice with the end result being that the student decided to return to Manurewa High School for another year. The case conference worked to facilitate a supportive environment so that the student and his parents gained information upon which the student could make his final decision.

Use of progress and full school reports were seen as a means of keeping parents informed and all staff members had regular phone contact with parents. The teacher in charge described the relationship between the Visual Resource Room staff and the parents as one of 'support, advice and compromise'.

For parents who lived outside of Auckland, face-to-face interaction was sometimes facilitated by arranging for parents to be involved in escort duty of other students from Homai College back to their province at mid-term or term holiday break. For example when the staff wished to plan an individualised educational programme for a new student who lived in New Plymouth, a case conference was held to coincide with a term holiday break and the student's mother was flown to Auckland for the meeting and then accompanied her daughter and other students resident at Homai back to New Plymouth.

In terms of increasing their effectiveness the Visual Resource Room staff would like to spend more time with parents. Two suggestions made by staff to facilitate this included the making of more regular times for parents to visit the Visual Resource Room and an orientation day particularly for parents who live outside the Auckland province.

Barriers to Increasing Effectiveness

Staffing of the Visual Resource Room appeared to be a central issue to increasing its effectiveness. At the time of the study the Visual Resource Room was officially staffed by two Junior 1 secondary teaching positions. As noted above the two job-sharing staff throughout 1986 were replacing a staff member released to undertake the Education of the Visually Handicapped Course, Auckland College of Education. The situation had become anomalous as both Junior 1 positions were classified as assistant teacher positions, but one teacher had been identified as the 'Teacher-in-Charge' and given full responsibility for running the room.

Limited teacher aide hours were seen as another barrier to increasing effectiveness. All staff felt that if the aide's time could be increased from five hours per week to at least double, then the teacher-time saved from maintenance of resource material, filing and typing could be used to increase the amount of individualised attention given to both students and staff. The appointment of a full-time teacher aide would enhance the role and effectiveness of the Visual Resource Room greatly.

When asked if the attitude of staff and students prevented their effectiveness in any way all staff of the Visual Resource Room reported that the student population was 'very supportive' and overall the staff were `most cooperative'. A major barrier however in working with staff was that subject teachers were often late in handing in their resource material to the Visual Resource Room staff for brailling or enlarging prior to the class session. Lack of time on the part of the subject teachers was thought to be responsible for these delays. In commenting on the problem, the teacher-in-charge said that 'the stress of the staff needed to be considered as teachers are often hard pressed'. Development of a good rapport with staff was thought essential by all Visual Resource Room staff for the maintenance of an effective visual resource room.

Support and Training for Working with Students who are Visually Impaired

The three Visual Resource Room teachers were secondary trained without any specific training in special education. All staff acknowledged that their training had been done on the job and the two job-sharing staff members were most appreciative of the in-service training that the teacher-in-charge had given them throughout the first few months in their new positions. The teacher-in-charge continued to be a resource for these staff members throughout the year. One of the job-sharing staff members thought she was advantaged by having taught in the school previously and specifically having had a blind student in one of her subjects. All staff would have liked some time release to learn braille. The teacher-in-charge had taught herself and her skill was much in demand for correction of braille work and brailling of urgent resources such as tests.

In terms of support for their roles all three Visual Resource Room teachers acknowledged Homai College as providing specialist and consultancy support. Manurewa High School administrative staff was also seen as most supportive. The teacher-in-charge spoke highly of the assistance she gained from the Deputy Principal in matters relating to placement and discipline of students.

Visual Resource Room staff thought that intensified training for subject teachers was not necessary, but one day of inservice could clarify the role of the Visual Resource Room, how to use it, and appropriate instructional strategies for working with students who are visually impaired.

The need for training for subject teachers was not given a high priority by the students. Several students thought it was unnecessary with two suggesting that the students themselves could tell the teachers what they needed to know. As one of the students said 'it isn't necessary. Get a blind person to talk to them and explain things that could be of assistance, it would be good for them to hear it from a blind person and not from sighted experts'. A second student expressed her opinion more succinctly, 'just open our mouths and tell them'.

In contrast, four students were in favour of secondary teachers gaining training. The major area stressed was an understanding by teachers of both the academic and social implications of a visual handicap. The academic areas requiring training were pinpointed by one student as 'how to teach diagrams and things that are visual'. Alternatively another student illustrated his reason for suggesting an understanding of the social implications when he said 'teachers are a bit wary and don't like saying the "blind person", we don't mind'.

Two parents felt strongly about the need for in-service training. One parent stressed that visual resource teachers needed 'to liaise closely with subject teachers (to bring) them up to date with the changing world of visual impairment'. A second parent saw the need as a more basic one of teachers gaining 'a greater understanding of the capabilities of blind students'.

In-service training for subject teachers was not given a high priority by them. They did, however, suggest teaching strategies to assist the student with a visual impairment. One teacher specified these as descriptive and concept portrayal techniques. The second area identified was a request for specific curriculum units to be developed that could 'fully include the blind student, for example, radio work in the English syllabus'.

Although only 8 of 22 subject teachers saw a need for in-service training, when asked what type of training they would prefer if it was made available within their subject area a majority responded. Equally popular were the categories of 'visits to watch and talk with competent teachers of the visually impaired' and 'on the job training'. Only a few teachers opted for school based seminars and a year's study leave gained no support.

Competencies Required for Mainstream Teachers

A sense of caring and awareness of the problems that a visual impairment may bring to learning were stressed by the Visual Resource Room staff as essential characteristics for a subject teacher to work successfully with a visually impaired student. As the teacher in charge said, 'If they care, the rest is surmountable'. A second characteristic identified by all staff was the ease with which the subject teacher approached the Visual Resource Room staff without being embarrassed or afraid to say, 'I haven't got a clue, what can I do? What is available?' Other qualities mentioned included a person who is well organised and plans ahead, clarifies explanations, has a sense of humour and a good teaching record.

The most common competency identified by students was the ability of a teacher to treat the student with a visual impairment the same as other students. The need for this competency was strongly expressed in several ways. One student who commented on the relievers said, '(Teachers need to) treat us like every other kid. Some of the relievers are terrible. They don't ask us if we want to go back to the Visual Resource Room. They ask the other students. I can answer for myself'. Another student stressed the need for teachers to recognise differences between the visually impaired and sighted students. He commented that, 'blind people should be on a par but (teachers) must acknowledge the need for difference for example, music in two different codes'. Similarly a third student saw the challenge for the teacher as one of being 'a person who can communicate normally as they would with any other student even if it comes to the point of the person asking for lots of help'. Other competencies mentioned by several students were patience, being available, understanding and both the ability to plan ahead and describe things clearly.

The consensus amongst parents of what makes for a competent teacher was a person who went out of his or her way to spend time with the student. As one parent explained when describing a teacher who had been particularly competent with her child, '(the teacher) talked to him and exchanged views; he discussed things with him'.

Academic and Social Advantages

The two major academic advantages that the Visual Resource Room staff saw arising from placement in a high school with a Visual Resource Room attached were one-to-one and small group tutoring and quick access to visual aids, materials and resources. Additionally all staff agreed that placement at Manurewa High School ensured that the majority of subject teachers had some experience in working with students who were visually impaired.

Visual Resource Room staff also pinpointed two major advantages for social support. The first was the support gained by the student from their peers who were visually impaired and the second was the acceptance by sighted peers who had adapted to seeing and working with students who were visually impaired since the time of their own enrolment at Manurewa High School.

In socially appraising the Visual Resource Room however, the staff pointed out that the room was often used as a base for the students who were visually impaired to congregate as a segregated group. The teacher-in-charge commented that the Visual Resource Room staff were continually making 'a consistent and firm effort to guide students to mix with sighted peers'. This problem was expressed by another Visual Resource Room teacher who felt that students who used the Visual Resource Room ran the risk of 'not being forced to deal with a sighted world on a social basis'. She went on to say that although, 'many of the students had sighted friends a better balance was needed'.

Students saw the Visual Resource Room service as providing them with both emotional and academic support. Five students saw it as a place they could return to from class to get help as there were 'always skilled people on hand'. Another student said the skilled people were 'available to advise teachers on problems'. A student who had recently become blind summed up the Visual Resource Room as providing 'heaps of extra help for a person who has just recently lost their sight'. In commenting on the teachers she said they 'are good to talk to and supportive of me'. Expressed, similarly, another student said the Visual Resource Room staff gave him 'encouragement, advice and help with problems and organised braille'.

The academic advantages outlined by the Visual Resource Room staff and the students of the Visual Resource Room service are echoed in the academic ratings that the Visual Resource Room teachers gave to the ten students. Eight of the ten students were rated average and above with six falling in the above average to top 20 percent rating.

Parents, students and subject teachers also rated the students' abilities across subject areas in comparison with the abilities of their peer group. Of the 22 subjects that parents rated, 20 fell into the average and above categories with 7 in the top 20 percent range. Likewise for the 22 Form 4 subject teachers who rated the student they taught against his or her peers, 19 ratings were in the average to above average categories with 10 students receiving a top 20 percent rating.

Overall the students' perceptions of their subject abilities agreed with the average to above ratings of parents and teachers. Of the 46 subjects rated, in 41 students fell into the average and above category with 20 falling in the top 20 percent group.

The majority of students reported that they had several friends although some difficulties were encountered in making friends, particularly at home. In relation to peer acceptance and personal adjustment the self-ratings by the students, compared favourably with those of their parents with the majority of students falling into average and above categories.

Conclusions from Study Two

The picture that has emerged of the Visual Resource Room is one of a facility set in a high school whose staff support both students with visual impairments, and their teachers to enable the students to participate fully in the life of the school. Academically the students are considered to be operating at an average to above level across a range of subjects, whilst socially, the students report having both sighted and non-sighted friends within the school.

The staff of the school speak highly of the work of the Visual Resource Room teachers and indicate a minimal level of stress associated with working with students who are visually impaired. As a result the teaching staff are favourably disposed to working with this group of students in the future.

Finally the role of the Visual Resource Room is seen as significant by students, teaching staff and parents. Such significance deserves recognition and this could be achieved by reclassifying one of its Junior 1 teaching positions to a more senior level.

CHAPTER 11

PERCEPTIONS OF COUNTRY CONSUMERS TO THE NATIONAL ADVISORY SERVICE : STUDY THREE

Staff of the National Advisory Service located in Auckland visit the Wanganui area to see students registered with the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind. In 1986, 39 students were registered within the area. They ranged across preschool to tertiary levels of education. Throughout the year the Advisory Service staff made five visits to the area, which enabled all 39 students to be seen on two occasions.

Purpose of the Study

Within the Wanganui area a survey of students with visual impairments enrolled in secondary schools, their parents, coordinating teachers and subject teachers was undertaken to:

1. Investigate the level of effectiveness of the advisory service at the secondary school level within a country area.

2. Identify the needs of both the staff and clients of the service in maintaining or improving the effectiveness of the Advisory Service within the Wanganui area.

3. Gain insights into how subject teachers work with and view having a student who is visually impaired in their classes.

The Sample

The Students

The sample consisted of seven students, six who were male and one who was female. Their ages ranged from 13 to 18 years. Students were enrolled across different forms and in 5 schools. One student was in Form 3, one in Form 4, two in Form 5 and three in Form 6. Schools were located in the areas of Fielding, Marton, Taihape and Palmerston North. Within two schools there were two students who were visually impaired.

Coordinating Teachers

For each of the five schools involved, a teacher who coordinated the programme of the student with a visual impairment was interviewed. A total of five teachers was interviewed for at the two schools where there were two students who were visually impaired, the same teacher coordinated both students' programmes. Four of the five coordinating teachers were guidance counsellors, and one was a form teacher. Three of the coordinating teachers were male, two female. Their average age was 47. All had a university degree and four had done papers in Guidance Counselling relating to Special Education, although no-one had taken any in-service training which related specifically to teaching the student who was visually impaired. The average length of teaching experience for the coordinating teachers was 16 years and within their present school the average number of students enrolled in the past five years with a visual impairment was three.

Parents

Six of the seven students' mothers participated in the study. The seventh student's family was no longer living in the local area. An eighth parent, who represented the national organisation, Parents of Visually Handicapped, Palmerston North Branch, also participated.

Subject Teachers

Twenty-six subject teachers, 14 female and 12 male returned questionnaires. Their average age was 41. Fifteen of the teachers held a university degree and 17 a Trained Teacher Certificate and 7 a Diploma in Teaching. Only 2 of the teachers had any qualifications that related to Special Education and these were Diploma in Educational Psychology papers and Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit papers on learning difficulties. Further, only 2 teachers indicated any in-service training to enable them to work with students who are visually impaired. One teacher had attended a conference convened by the Advisory staff, Homai College in 1984 entitled, 'Potential through opportunity'. The average numbel organised through the cooperation of the school board and the school administration. Parents were invited to come to the school for the parent interview. Two interviewers were involved. At each school was one interviewer who interviewed the coordinating teacher and the second interviewed the student. The second interviewer would then meet with the student's parent. The itinerary of the two interviewers was similar to that followed by the Advisory staff, flying from Auckland to Palmerston North and travelling by car from school to school. The Advisory staff had been in the area within the month preceding the interviewers' arrival.

On arrival at the first school it was found that the student to be interviewed was in the third and not the fourth form. The interview was carried out and this broadened the sample of students to include one Form 3 student. An eighth student making up the total sample of secondary school students within the Wanganui area who were visually impaired was also in the third form, but time did not enable his inclusion in the sample.

Interviews

The student, parent and coordinating teacher interview schedules that were used were the same as had been used in the study of the Auckland area. When all questions were coded and analysed the results, although limited by the size of the sample, reflected the findings of the Auckland study. In order to avoid repetition it was decided to report only the responses to those interview questions that had a bearing on what emerged as a major issue of the study, that is a change to the Advisory Service Structure.

Subject Teacher Questionnaire

The same questionnaire as had been used in the Case Study of the Manurewa Visual Resources Room for fourth form teachers was used (Appendix F). However, all questions were pre-coded. The questionnaires were left with the coordinating teachers who were asked to distribute them to four core or major subject teachers for the student who was visually impaired. All 28 subject teachers returned the forms to Auckland.

Informal Contact With Parent Body and Helping Professionals

On arrival in Palmerston North, and after visiting the first two schools the importance of making contact with personnel from the Low Vision Clinic, Palmerston North and the Social Work staff, Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, Palmerston North and local branch of the National Body of the Parents of Visually Handicapped was made evident. Personnel from the first two groups were mentioned by several interviewees as providing vital back-up services for students with visual impairments and the parent body, support for other parents in seeking the provision of such services.

Telephone conversations were held with a medical practitioner from the Low Vision Clinic and a Social Worker from the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind. A home visit was made to meet with a representative of the Parents of Visually Handicapped Association in Palmerston North.

Results

Role of the Advisory Service

All seven students said that they saw the advisory teacher twice a year. Five students considered that the advisory teacher assisted them by giving advice and checking on problems. A sixth saw the role of the adviser as one of liaison between him and the Foundation. In contrast a seventh student pointed out a shortcoming of the service when he said '(they) find out how I'm doing and then they're off again'.

When asked how the effectiveness of the Advisory Service could be improved the reaction of the students was divided between three students who thought that the service didn't require any change and another four who would like more visits but thought that the distance from Auckland to their area worked against this becoming a reality. Within this context one student concluded that probably nothing more could be done, '...a school like this doesn't cater for a person with eyesight difficulties... I've got by for five years without much help at all. I plod along at my own pace about ten times slower than anyone else and teachers wonder why I don't get (my) work done!'

All five parents had met the advisory teacher who visited their student and all spoke highly of the meeting. As one parent said, it was an 'excellent meeting and a copy of everything was sent which helped the teachers a lot'. However, when asked how the role of the advisory teacher could be made more effective, three parents stressed the need for more regular contact at a regional base and spoke in strong support of setting up a Visual Resource Centre in the Manawatu area.

All five coordinating teachers saw the assistance that the advisory teachers gave as falling into two areas. The first was identifying areas where the student needed assistance and the second was provision of visual aids and materials. Put succinctly one coordinator said, 'the adviser is aware of the particular needs of the visually impaired student and what is the best thing for him at this moment'.

In all five schools the coordinators reported that little time was spent by the advisers with subject teachers. The cause was seen to arise from the limited time that the adviser had available when visiting from Auckland. The coordinators therefore took over the role of giving feedback to the staff, following the adviser's visit, as it related to the needs and problems of the student who was visually impaired.

Coordinators were asked how the effectiveness of the adviser's role could be increased for both the student and the subject teachers. Only one coordinator made any suggestion for the students and this was for the adviser to accompany the student into the classroom. However, in relation to staff the coordinators were more forthcoming with two suggesting that the adviser visit more regularly and participate in staff meetings. Another two coordinators thought that the appointment of a locally based itinerant teacher would solve the problem of distance and lack of time on the part of the adviser.

In the event that a local appointment was not possible one teacher suggested that the Advisory Service should make a video on teaching strategies for use with secondary school students who have a visual impairment. Secondly, that the adviser should spend one full day attending classes with the student and on the following day have appointments with teachers to discuss any problems observed for the student or in the teachers' teaching strategies.

Only 5 of 28 subject teachers indicated that they gained assistance from the advisory teachers. The major areas of assistance specified by 4 of the teachers were discussion of the student's visual problems as they affected their academic progress combined with assistance on use of more appropriate instructional techniques. Only 6 subject teachers requested more assistance from the advisers and only 4 thought that inservice training was necessary in order to work more effectively with the advisory teacher.

Summary

Students, parents and coordinating teachers all acknowledged the worth of the Advisory Service particularly in relation to how its staff worked to identify the educational needs and provide resources and assistance for those students with visual impairments. However, the limitations of the service being located in Auckland were stressed. The desirability of more regular contact with the advisory staff was emphasised by all three groups. This need became more apparent when it was discovered that only a minority of subject teachers interacted directly with the advisory staff on their twice yearly visits into the region. Several parents and coordinating teachers stressed the need for a locally based Visual Resource Centre.

When asked to identify if their subject area presented any difficulties for teaching students 20 of the subject teachers said that it did. The major problem related to use of the blackboard and overhead projector. Others were the reading of texts and handouts, diagrams, the use of equipment, the student's slow pace of work and the student's feeling of discouragement. The difficulties listed by the teachers reflected more problems that were student rather than teacher orientated.

A large majority of the subject teachers (22) said that they modified their teaching strategies when working with students who are visually impaired. Asked to indicate from a pre-selected list what modification they used the three strongest areas that emerged were giving the student extra time in class to complete exercises (16), individualised instruction (15) and use of enlarged materials (15). Other modifications were small group work, use of a sighted buddy, assistance out of class time, use of specialised equipment.

When all subject teachers were asked about the amount of time that they spent with the student who was visually impaired relative to other students in class sessions 10 said 'more time' with a greater number of 17 indicating 'about the same'.

Although modifications were frequently made to teaching strategies only 5 subject teachers said they modified the subject content. For 3 teachers this meant omitting teaching areas of the curriculum that proved too difficult for the student because of impaired sight.

'A small increase' in the amount of stress was reported by 23 subject teachers as a result of having a student with a visual impairment in their class. A higher level of stress was noted by another 4 of the teachers but was not considered to be a 'marked increase', whereas 1 teacher thought the increase to be negligible. Just over half (15) of the subject teachers thought that the effect on other class members was neutral with 10 seeing the reaction of other students as 'all favourable', and the remaining 3 teachers spreading their responses individually across the categories of 'mostly favourable', 'evenly divided' and 'not favourable'.

Overall assistance from resource people for the subject teachers was limited. The person most frequently described as being available was the advisory teacher and this was reported by the subject teachers. The school guidance counsellor was mentioned by 4, the Dean by 3 and other resource people mentioned were a laboratory technician, a teacher aide, head of an

English Department and an amanuensis (a person who assists with reading and taking dictation in exams).

Just over half of the teachers reported that specialised equipment was available within their schools for use by students who are visually impaired during their class sessions. The most frequently reported equipment was enlarged text. Enlarged handouts and class notes were used by 18 of the 28 teachers.

There were no students in the sample who used braille, and no brailled materials were reported by the teachers. Twelve teachers reported that students used their personal miniscopes in the teaching sessions. A closed circuit television system was reported by one teacher and another reported a talking calculator. Overall the replies indicated a paucity of equipment and resources.

If in-service training was provided for teachers to work with students who are visually impaired the two most popular choices for the type of in-service training were 'to watch and talk with competent teachers of the visually impaired' (12), and 'on the job training' (7).

Over half of the subject teachers (10) reported that they were favourably disposed to teaching a student with a visual impairment in the future, 6 indicated that they felt neutral and 6 failed to respond.

When teachers were asked to say what major concerns they held with regards to teaching a student with a visual impairment, only 13 of the teachers responded. Two major issues emerged. The first was knowing how to assist the student meet his or her ability level and expectation. The second was lack of time to prepare work.

Summary

1. A majority of teachers experienced some difficulties in teaching students who are visually impaired.

2. The most frequent difficulty reported arose from the students' inability to see and read from the blackboard and overhead projector.

3. The majority of subject teachers indicated that they modified their teaching strategies when working with students who are visually impaired.

4. The three major modifications indicated were use of enlarged materials, giving the student extra time to complete exercises in class and individualised instruction.

5. Only a minority of teachers modified the curriculum content and for a few this meant omitting areas of the curriculum that proved too difficult for the student as a result of his/her partial sight.

6. In terms of time spent in the class with the students who are visually impaired, two thirds of teachers said about the same and the rest reported more time.

7. The majority of subject teachers experienced a small increase in stress although they indicated that over half of the sighted students reacted neutrally.

8. Few subject teachers were supported by resource personnel. Categories of assistance mentioned included advisory teachers, school guidance counsellors and Deans.

9. Only just over half of the subject teachers reported that specialised equipment was available in the schools for their use with students with visual impairments. Enlarged tests were noted by just over a third and enlarged handouts and class notes by an even lesser number. A closed circuit television system was reported as being available in only one school which may reflect that it is recommended for use for students of very low vision, i.e 3/60 or less.

10. Over half of the subject teachers were favourably disposed to working in the future with students who are visually impaired.

11. Two major concerns were expressed by teachers. These were knowing how to assist the student to meet his/her ability level and their lack of time to prepare work.

Need for Change in Services

In overviewing the findings of the survey a major issue has emerged which relates to increasing the contact of students, parents and teachers with the advisory staff. Two suggestions were made which were first, to increase the number of visits into the area by advisory teachers and second, the setting up of a regional visual resource centre. The latter suggestion was strongly supported locally within Palmerston North by the Parents of Visually Handicapped Association representatives of the Low Vision Clinic, and by RNZFB Social Work staff. The National Advisory Service, Homai College has since submitted a proposal for the development of a Visual Resource Centre in the Wanganui area to the Department of Education.

Parents of Visually Handicapped Association

The Parents of Visually Handicapped Association is a national voluntary organisation of parents whose children have visual impairments. The Palmerston North group meets regularly and throughout the interview with its local President it became apparent that the group had seriously addressed the need for the development of a Visual Resource Centre in the Manawatu area. A submission had recently been made on behalf of the group to Homai College, in which a Visual Resource Centre with itinerant teachers was proposed to support teachers who had students with visual impairments in their classes. A major reason for recommending the development was expressed in the submission as follows:

> Teachers and pupils in this area have suffered the frustrations of having one or two visits a year from itinerant teachers based in Auckland, which does not solve difficulties as they arise. An itinerant service by correspondence causes delays and misunderstandings about problems, resulting in pupils experiencing a lack of success in education skills (especially reading and comprehension) because of a physical inability to keep up with their fellow pupils (Parents of Visually Handicapped Association, 1985, p.1).

The submission further proposed that the Visual Resource Centre be sited in Palmerston North because it is centrally located to service the surrounding areas of Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay and Manawatu and because proximity to the Low Vision Clinic would mean that clinic staff would be able to help the staff of a Visual Resource Centre. A similar relationship could also develop between the Social Work Department of Massey University and the Education Department of Palmerston North Teachers' College.

Both the social worker representative, Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, Palmerston North and the medical practitioner from the Low Vision Clinic spoke highly of the National Advisory Service staff but emphasised the need for more frequent contact. The representative from the Low Vision Clinic also stressed the need for students with visual impairments whose visual acuity was just outside the required limits to be registered with the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind. Both personnel were in full support of the development of a locally based Visual Resource Centre.

National Advisory Service Support

In December 1986 the National Adviser and the Principal of Homai College submitted to the Education Department a Proposal for the establishment of a Visual Resource Centre in Palmerston North (Homai College, 1986). Similarly to the submission from the parents group the latter proposal sees the structure of the service (comprising) the Centre base at Palmerston North with outpost positions in New Plymouth and Napier. The submission goes on to outline proposed staffing and costing for the establishment of the Visual Resource Centre. Two teaching staff are proposed for the central office in Palmerston North and one each for the two outposts. An orientation and mobility instructor, teachers aide, braille transcriber and clerical assistant positions are also part of the proposed staff schedule.

Conclusions from Study Three

The survey findings indicate a need for more face-to-face contact between advisory staff and school personnel, students and parents. A regionally based service was mentioned by several respondents throughout the survey and this suggestion has been formalised by the Parents of Visually Handicapped Association, in a proposal to Homai College, for a Visual Resource Centre in the Manawatu area. This proposal in turn has gained support from that presented to the Education Department by Homai College entitled, *Proposal for the establishment of a Visual Resource Centre in Palmerston North.*

CHAPTER 12

AN OVERVIEW

Three studies have been outlined in which the perceptions of students who are visually impaired and those of their parents and teachers towards their mainstreamed placements were explored. The findings of each study support varying levels of change for the specialised service supporting the placement.

The first study, which examined the level of effectiveness of the advisory and itinerant services within high schools in Auckland, found that an increase in the level of intensity of the services is thought desirable. This finding is in keeping with the policies of Homai College arising out of its review in 1986 where it is proposed that additional Visual Resource Centres be established within the Auckland metropolitan area. The function and role of these centres and visual resource teachers are fully outlined in the Homai College Review Document (Stacey & Gibbs, 1986). Chiefly, the teachers would be responsible for local assessments, coordinating assistance for students from specialist services at the local level, supporting teachers and students within the school setting, providing in-service training for teachers, resources, transcribed materials and specialist teachers where necessary. The role is similar to what is already undertaken by the staff of the Auckland Visual Resource Centre, Homai College, but the difference is that a staff of three visual resource teachers located within an area of Auckland, decentralised from Homai College would be responsible for only 30 students across preschool to tertiary levels.

In relation to the second study of a Visual Resource Room, the level of support from the staff is considered by students, parents and subject teaching staff, to be effective. The role of the visual resource room teacher could be enhanced nevertheless by the appointment of a full-time teaching aide and reclassification of one of the teaching positions to a more senior level.

Similar to the first study, the findings of the third, of the role of the advisory service within a country area, also indicate the need for increased intensity of the service. The proposal of the Parents of the Visually Handicapped Association, Palmerston North, has gained support from

Homai College which has since submitted a proposal to the Department of Education for the development of a visual resource centre at Palmerston North.

The development of a series of visual resource centres decentralised from Homai College has become a popular solution to the need to increase the advisory and itinerant services of Homai College to students within regular schools in Auckland and country areas. Philosophically this thinking has paralleled that of the Department of Education's Review of Special Education (1987) in which special education units have been proposed as a model to deliver special education support through the role of itinerant teachers to students with special needs in their local schools.

A challenge to the provision of any model of support service for students with disabilities is raised by students with visual impairments throughout the present studies. Although the majority of students wish to receive services they stress they should not be delivered at the expense of incurring further stigmatisation. An issue therefore that should be addressed by service providers is to decide upon what type of model promotes maximum service with limited characterisation of the student as different. More specifically, and in relation to a model that provides itinerant teaching staff the question becomes:

> "Does an itinerant teacher who visits a school community promote more or less stigma for students who are disabled than a resource teacher whose role is seen and accepted as a permanent feature of a school community?"

Postscript

As of 1989 a Visual Resource Centre has been established by the Education Department at Palmerston North with two outposts staffed at Napier and New Plymouth.

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APPENDIX A

Membership of the Advisory Committee

Mrs Helen Casey	Parent Representative
Mrs Adrienne Cranshaw	Kohia Teachers' Centre
Mrs Elaine Gilmour	Homai College
Mr Garry Hornby	Auckland College of Education (until July, 1986)
Mr Paul Hutchinson	Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind
Dr Geraldine McDonald	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Dr David Mitchell	University of Waikato
Mrs Gwen Nagle	Homai College
Mr Adrian Pole	Homai College
Mr Tom Rogerson	Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind
Mr Frank Stacey	Department of Education
Ms Jan Thorburn	Auckland College of Education
Dr Patricia M O'Brien	J R McKenzie Senior Fellow and Project Officer

APPENDIX B Interview Schedule for the Student

DATE:__________

NAME OF STUDENT:__________ AGE:________ DOB:________

No of years at the school:__________ Previous Schools:__________

Form:________

Type of visual impairment:__________

1. Which subjects are you taking?

☐ 1

2. Which subjects are the most difficult? Give reasons

☐

3. Which subjects are the easiest? Give reasons.

☐

4. Are there any subjects where you don't follow the same curriculum as the other subjects? What is different? Why?

Subject	Difference	Why

*5. Are there any subjects where you get extra assistance? What type of assistance?

Subject	Assistance

*6. Do you gain assistance from special staff within the school or visiting staff?

- Visual resource teacher ☐
- Itinerant teacher ☐
- Advisory teacher ☐
- Psychologist ☐
- Other (specify) ☐

* Indicates those questions used for the Visual Resource Study.

*7. How often do you see these staff?

Staff Frequency

How do they help you?

Where do you meet with them?

8. Which of the regular staff give you the most assistance?
    Dean ( )
    Form teacher ( )
    Guidance Counsellor ( )
    Other (specify) ( )
    Not necessary ( )

How do they help you?

Where do you see them for assistance?

*9. Which staff give you the most help in getting through any - academic difficulties?

Staff Position

social difficulties? How? Where?

Staff Position

10. How is your work corrected?
    typed copy
    itinerant staff
    other

*11. Do you use any of the following specialised equipment at school? If you don't would any be useful? Do you have access to the equipment anywhere else?

Equipment	Use Yes	 No	Useful if available Yes	 No	Anywhere else State where
Magnifiers					
Perkins Brailler					
Optacon					
Talking Book					
Kurzwell Reading Machine					
Enlarged Print Texts					
Enlarged Print Handouts					
Brailled Texts					
Brailled Reference Books					
Cassettee Recorder & Player					
Enlarged maps					

	10	
		20
30		
	40	

Equipment	Use		Useful if available		Anywhere else State where
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Talking Calculator					
Close Circuit TV					
Portable Typewriter					
Other e.g. Printer - Braille					

50		

*12. Do you gain any of these specialised services at the school? If you don't would they be useful? Do you gain them anywhere else?

Service	Use		Useful if available		State where else
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Braille Lessons					
Transcription Service					
Musical instrument tuition					
Orientation & Mobility Lessons					
Adapted Physical Education					
Technicrafts					
Technical Aids					
Other					

	60	
		70

*13. What makes for a good teacher of students like yourself?

*14. Are there any areas that you think secondary teachers should gain training in to assist students like yourself?

15. Are there any subject areas that you would like to take but believe that your visual impairment has hindered the school from offering it to students like you?

Subject **Comment**

*16. Have you got many friends at the school?

none
a few
several
don't know

☐

*17. Name 3 of them and state if they are sighted or visually impaired.

Name	Sighted/V.I.

☐

*18. Do you have a special friend at school?

Yes/No Name him/her

*19. What sort of things do you do together with your friends at school?

☐

20. Do you see much of your school friends outside of school?

Yes/No

☐ 80

*21. How much time do you spend with your friends each week outside of school?

daily
3/4 time per week
once or twice a week
less than once weekly
less than once a month

☐

*22. What about other friends - do you have friends who live near you, but go to different schools?

Yes
No

☐

If yes, how many, how old and how often do you see them?

No.	Age	Frequently
		daily 3/4 times per week once or twice a week less than once weekly less than once a month

☐

*23. Do you ever invite friends home?

No
Yes - once or twice
Weekly
Less than once a month

☐

*24. What sorts of things do you do with friends outside of school?

*25. How do you make friends at school?

*26. Are there difficulties in making friends at school/at home?

At school

At home

*27. Does your handicap limit your friendships in any way?

*28. Does the school help you to make friends? How? If it doesn't how could it?

How?

How could it?

29. (If the child has been to Homai) ask what are the major differences between Homai and the local high school?

30. Are you happy with this placement? ☐

31. Have you ever considered changing schools? ☐

Yes/No

Where to?

Why?

☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐ ☐

*33. Finally let's return to the subjects you are taking and it would be helpful to me if you would rate yourself in comparison with the rest of the class. Do you fall in the?

Subject	Bottom 20%	Between 20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	top 20%
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

*34. Also rate yourself for peer acceptance and personal adjustment, i.e. the way you feel about yourself as a person, using the same rating system in comparison with the rest of the class.

Peer Acceptance	Very well accepted	Well accepted	Just accepted	Not accepted	
Personal Adjustment	Feel very good about yourself	Feel good about yourself	Feel O.K. about yourself	Feel not so good about yourself	

32. Which type of school placement do you think helps students like you to make -

	Local High	Local High Support	Local High Support	Local High
	no support	Visiting Itinerant staff	Advisory visiting staff	Visual Resource Centre
(a) the best possible progress in learning.				
(b) develop feelings of being a worthwhile person.				
(c) take part in school activities like clubs and sports.				
(d) make friends.				
(e) have good family relationships.				

☐
☐
☐ 90
☐

*32. (i) What are the good things about your particular placement e.g. having an itinerant teacher visit; advisory teacher?

*32. (ii) How would you improve your particular situation in relation to the visits of the itinerant or advisory teachers?

APPENDIX C **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PARENT**

For office use only

PARENT'S NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

Student's name:

Age:

Form:

Date of administration:

Administrator:

REFERRAL

1. Ask the parent to outline the student's previous school placements. ☐

Placement	Years	Levels

2. Did you have a choice over the present placement? ☐

Yes ( )
No ( )

If yes, specify what the choice involved.

3. Did the high school seek any information on your child's visual impairment? ☐

Yes ( )
No ( )

Specify:

4. Were you supported in your present choice of school by:

	Yes	No	Comment
Family	( )	( )	
Receiving School	( )	( )	
Referring School	( )	( )	
Itinerant/advisory service	( )	( )	
R.N.Z.F.B.	( )	( )	
Other	( )	( )	

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

5. Did you consider placing your child at Manurewa High School where there is a visual Resource Centre? ☐

Yes ( ) Why didn't you?

No ( ) Why not?

6. Are you satisfied with X present placement? ☐

Satisfied ( )
Fairly satisfied ( )
Not satisfied ( )

Comment:

7. If you could develop the ideal educational placement for your child would it be different to the present one? Describe the differences.

CURRICULUM/ACADEMIC PROGRESS

8. What subjects is X taking this year?

Core Subjects **Other Subjects**

*9. Could you rate X across his/her subjects in comparison with his/her form members

Subject	Bottom 20%	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Top 20%
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

* Indicates those questions used for the Visual Resource Study.

*10. Could you also rate X on how he/she is accepted by other students. Shade the appropriate box.

Peer acceptance	Very well accepted	Well accepted	Accepted by a few	Not accepted

☐

*11. Could you also rate how X feels about him/herself as a person. Shade the appropriate box.

Personal adjustment	Feels very good	Feel good	Feels just o k	Feels negative

☐

12. Are you satisfied with the range of subjects that X is taking?

Satisfied ( )
Fairly satisfied ( )
Not satisfied ( )

☐

13. (If fairly or not satisfied) what other subject areas would you like to see X taking?

14. Why do you think X has not been given the opportunity to take these subjects?

Student's loss of vision ( )
Lack of ability on X part ( )
Lack of teacher training in how to modify curriculum for visually impaired students ( )
Class too large for teacher to give individualised assistance ( )
Lack of specialist help for teacher ( )
Lack of specialist help for student ( )
Other (Specify) ( )

☐

15. In X schooling which subjects have proved the most difficult?

Comment:

16. Why do you think the above subjects have proved the most difficult?

X lack of ability ( )
Lack of ability on the part of the teacher to modify the curriculum ( )
Lack of specialist aids, equipment ( )
Lack of teacher training in how to teach subjects to the visually impaired ( )
Lack of transcribed materials ( )
X slowness owing to the visual impairment ( )
Other (specify) ( )

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

17. In comparison with your other children how involved are you as a parent in your child's educational programme? (Use parents of a friend's sighted child if X is an only child).

Much more involved ( )
Similar ( )
Less involved ( )

☐

18. If you are much more involved specify how...

Transport ( )
Transcription services ( )
Parent/teacher contact ( )
Homework assistance ( )
Parent support group ( )
Other (specify) ( )

☐☐☐☐☐☐

19. How do you feel about this added involvement?

Accepting as it is in the interests of the student ( )
Pressurized ( )
Annoyed as it reflects the school's lack of resources ( )
Neutral ( )
Other (specify) ( )

☐☐☐☐☐

20. Can you see any alternatives to decrease your involvement?

Increased staff ( )
Specialized equipment in schools ( )
Transcription arranged and collected by school ( )
Other (specify) ( )

☐☐☐☐

21. **TYPE OF PLACEMENT**

In general where do you think students like X are the most likely to:

	Local High No support	Local High Visiting Itinerant Staff	Local High Advisory Visiting Staff	Local High Visual Resource Centre
(a) Make the best possible progress in learning?				
(b) Develop feelings of being a worth-while person?				
(c) Take part in school activities like clubs and sports?				
(d) Make friends?				
(e) Have good family relationships?				

☐
☐
☐
☐

22. **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Has X got many friends at school?

None ( )
A few ( )
Several ( )
Don't know ( )

☐

23. Name X 3 closest friends at school. Are they sighted or visually impaired?

Friend	Sighted/Visually Impaired
1.	
2.	
3.	

☐

---

24. What about a special friend? Does X have one at school? What name?

Yes/No

Name: ____________________

☐

25. Does X see much of his school friends outside of school hours?

Yes ( )
No ( )
Don't know ( )

☐

26. (If yes) how much time each week does X spend with them?

Daily ( )
Once or twice weekly ( )
Three or four times weekly ( )
Less than once weekly ( )
Less than once a month ( )

☐

What sort of things do they do together?

27. What about other friends - does X have any friends who live near home, but go to different schools?

Yes ( )
No ( )

☐

28. (If yes) how many friends? Name three, their ages and how often does X spend time with them?

Number	Names	Ages	Contact (use 26 code)

☐

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29. Does X ever have friends at home?

No ( )
Yes - once or twice ( )
Weekly ( )
Once a month ( )
Less than once a month ( )

30. As a parent what do you see as the greatest difficulties for X in making friends?

At school

At home

At the hostel

31. Are you satisfied with how the school promotes friendships for X?

Yes/No

32. (If no) what would you like to see happen?

33. CONCERNS
What are your main concerns for X when you think about the future?

34. Is there anything that the present school system could do to help overcome these concerns?

☐ ☐

	Visual Resource Teacher	Advisory Visiting Teacher	Orientation Mobility Teacher	Itinerant Teacher	Social Worker	Careers Counsellor	Vocational Placement Officer	Braille Instructor	Transcription Personnel	Tutor Service	Other e.g. Teacher Aide
*35. Does X gain help from any of the listed specialists? If yes state where, either at the school or e.g. Home. 1=gains assistance 2=does not gain assistance.											
*36. How often is assistance given by the above resource people. 1=daily 2=weekly 3=fortnightly 4=monthly 5=once a term or less.											
*37. How helpful is each specialist? 1=most helpful 2=helpful 3=not helpful											
*38. Which specialists would you like X to gain increased assistance from? 1=would like more assistance 2=no more assistance.											

*39. Have you ever met or had discussions with the __________ teacher who visits your child?

Yes	( )
No	( )

☐

Comment on type of interaction.

*40. In relation to the __________ teacher who visits your child at the school, what changes to their role would you like to see to increase their effectiveness?

41. Are you satisfied with the specialized equipment that the school has for students like X?

Most satisfied	( )
Satisfied	( )
Fairly satisfied	( )
Not satisfied	( )

☐

42. If not satisfied list equipment you see as needed in the school or available to the school.

*43. What specialised services would you like increased at the school level?

*44. PARENTAL JUDGEMENTS ABOUT TEACHER COMPETENCE

Has X had any teachers you found to be particularly good with him? What makes them so good?

Special knowledge or interest	( )	☐
Personal characteristics	( )	☐
Other (specify)	( )	☐

*45. Should X teachers have special training?

Yes	( )
No	( )
Uncertain	( )

☐

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*46. Are there particular areas that X teachers need training in?

*47. Finally do you have any comment on the itinerant, advisory or visual resource room services?

***

APPENDIX D INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CO-ORDINATING TEACHER OVERVIEWING THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENT'S PROGRAMME

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Respond to the answers given by ticking the appropriate box or writing in the space provided.
2. The boxes in the column on the right-hand side are for scoring purposes only. Do not write in the boxes.
3. Prior to answering the questions that relate to the student with a visual impairment, please complete the background information section which will enable comparisons between teachers of different schools, age, sex and qualifications.
4. All information will be treated confidentially.

SECTION A

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Background Information: Please tick the appropriate categories.

1. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( ) ☐ 1

2. Age: Please indicate e.g. [3|6] ☐☐ ☐☐

3. Location of School: Auckland / Wanganui / Northland ☐

4. Please tick if your school:

   (i) has a visual resource centre ( )
   or
   (ii) is visited by an itinerant teacher from the Auckland Visual Resource Centre, Homai College ( )
   or
   (iii) is visited by an adviser from the National Advisory Service, Homai College ( ) ☐

5. Please tick which of the following qualifications you hold:

   Trained Teachers Certificate ( ) ☐
   Diploma in Teaching ( ) ☐
   University Degree ( ) ☐
   Other (specify) ( ) ☐

   ____

   ____

2.

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6. Please tick if you have any of the following special education qualifications.

   Education of the Visually Handicapped Course ( ) ☐ 10
   Education of the Handicapped Children Course ( ) ☐
   Education of the Deaf Course ( ) ☐
   Other relevant courses e.g. (University or ASTU papers) (specify) ☐

   ____

   ____

7. Have you attended any relevant in-service courses for teaching the student with a visual impairment.

   Yes ( ) No ( ) Date: 19 ☐

   If yes, specify.

   ____

   ____

8. How many students with visual impairments have been enrolled in the school in the last 5 years? Please write number in box. ☐ ☐

9. How many years have you taught? Please write number in box. ☐ ☐

10. Please tick your official position at the school.

    Principal ( ) ☐
    Deputy Principal ( ) ☐
    Senior Mistress/Master ( ) ☐
    Dean ( ) ☐ 20
    Form Teacher ( ) ☐
    Guidance Counsellor ( ) ☐
    Other positions of responsibility ( ) ☐
    Assistant Teacher ( ) ☐

SECTION B

The Student: Listed below is the name of a 4th Form student with a visual impairment in your school. Some questions relate specifically to this student. Others are more general and relate to students with visual impairments as a group.

Student's Name ______________________________ Form ☐

APPENDIX D Interview Schedule for Co-ordinating Teacher Overviewing the Visually Impaired Student's Programme

1. What are your direct responsibilities in relation to the above student?

2. How long have you known the student?

____

____

3. Compared to other students in __________ form please rate x on:

	Bottom 20%	below average	average	above average	Top 20%
Overall academic achievement					
Personal adjustment i.e. how he/she feels about themselves					
Peer acceptance					

30

4. What were the referral procedures for this student? Were they different to other students?

Procedures

Differences

5. Are you satisfied with information that accompanied this student on referral?

very satisfied ( )
satisfied ( )
not satisfied ( )

6. (If not satisfied) what other information would be of benefit to the school and teachers?

7. In general how would you describe the attitude of the staff to ________________ as a visually impaired student?

very accepting ( )
accepting ( )
not accepting ( )

If not accepting please state why.

Increased work load ( )
Lack of specialised training ( )
Feelings of inadequacy ( )
Lack of services ( )
Other ( )

8. Does this student require more academic and social assistance than other students who are not visually impaired?

Academic Areas	Social Areas
Yes ( )	Yes ( )
No ( )	No ( )

9. If yes, please indicate which staff provide the support.

Staff	Academic	Social
Deputy Principal	( )	( )
Senior Mistress/Master	( )	( )
Dean	( )	( )
Form Teacher	( )	( )
Subject Teacher	( )	( )
Guidance Counsellor	( )	( )
Other	( )	( )

A S

40

50

10. Do any of the following resource people visit the school to assist the student and his/her teachers? Use the following code to indicate how often.

0 = doesn't visit school
1 = daily
2 = weekly
3 = fortnightly
4 = monthly
5 = once a term or less

Category	Works with Student	Works with Teachers
Itinerant Teacher	( )	( )
Advisory Teacher	( )	( )
Psychologist	( )	( )
Social Worker (RNZFB)	( )	( )
Orientation & Mobility Instructor	( )	( )
Vocational Counsellor	( )	( )
Other (specify)	( )	( )

S T

60

11. How does the itinerant/advisory teacher assist the student? Describe.

12. How does the itinerant/advisory teacher assist the student's teachers? Describe.

13. Are there any ways in which the work of the itinerant/advisory teacher could be made more effective for:

the student

the teachers

14. What subject areas have proved difficult for teachers working with this student? Describe difficulties.

15. In terms of the placement of visually impaired students in mainstream schools would you care to indicate where you think students make:

	Local High / No support	Local High support / Visiting itinerant staff	Local High support / Advisory visiting staff	Local High / Visual Resource Cen.	
(a) The best possible progress in learning.					☐
(b) Develop feelings of being a worthwhile person.					☐
(c) Take part in school activities, clubs and sports.					☐
(d) Make friends.					☐ 70
(e) Have good family relationships.					☐

16. Which of the following specialized equipment does the school have for use with students who are visually impaired? If not available please indicate if you think it desirable.

	In the School	Desirable but not available
1. Perkins Brailler	( )	( )
2. Magnifiers	( )	( )
3. Personal Miniscope	( )	( )
4. Brailled texts	( )	( )
5. Brailled reference books	( )	( )
6. Brailled handouts and class notes	( )	( )
7. Brailled tests	( )	( )
8. Enlarged print texts	( )	( )
9. Enlarged reference books	( )	( )
10. Enlarged handouts and class notes	( )	( )
11. Enlarged tests	( )	( )
12. Cassette recorder and player	( )	( )
13. Talking calculator	( )	( )
14. Raised maps	( )	( )
15. Braille and print machine that produces a braille and print copy simultaneously	( )	( )
16. Portable typewriters	( )	( )
17. Other (please specify)	( )	( )

80

17. Which of the following services does the school provide or make arrangements for?

Service	Provides	Specify other arrangements	
Braille lessons	( )	____________	☐
Music instrument tuition	( )	____________	☐
Orientation and mobility training	( )	____________	☐
Adapted Physical Education	( )	____________	☐
Technicrafts	( )	____________	☐ 90
Technical Aids	( )	____________	☐
OTHER		____________	

18. Could I check with you how the school has adapted its environment to meet the needs of a visually impaired student? If the following adaptations haven't been made please check if you consider them desirable.

Adaptation	Made	Not made but desirable
1. Brailled signs throughout the school on doors etc.		
2. Cleared walkways, passages.		
3. Installed new lighting.		
4. Installed white boards.		
5. Make extra space available for student's texts.		
6. Brailled texts in library.		
7. Hand rails.		
8. Others.		

100

19. Does the school arrange for the student's texts and resources to be enlarged ( ) or brailled ( ). Not necessary ( ) Desirable, but not done ( ).

Where and how:

110

20. What makes for a competent teacher of a visually impaired student?

Training ( )
Flexibility ( )
Prepared to work extra ( )
Other ( )

21. What makes for a popular student who is visually impaired with teachers?

Pleasant personality ( )
Academically bright ( )
Supportive parents ( )
Other ( )

120

with the other students?

22. Does the school do anything to help the visually impaired student adjust to:

(a) Fact of his/her visual impairment?

(b) Attitudes of others towards them:

Staff?

Students?

23. Does the school do anything to help the regular student understand the needs of the visually impaired student?

24. Do you consider inservice training necessary for teachers to work successfully with students with visual impairments?

Yes ( )
No ( )

If yes, describe areas to be covered in the training.

☐

APPENDIX E INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR VISUAL RESOURCE STAFF

1. **Description of the role**

(a) Describe the physical location and network of schools visited.

(b) Describe the no. of students, age, visual condition and form level of students visited across Forms 4, 5, 6.

(c) Describe the nature of support offered to students.
Include resources, programming, referral, counselling and average contact time.

APPENDIX E Interview Schedule for Visual Resource Staff

(d) Describe the nature of the support offered to teachers: nos., (administration; subject areas); Assessment, Planning, Withdrawal, Resources, Demonstration, Contact Time.

(e) Does your role include support for parents? How? counselling, progress reports, advocacy,

(f) Describe how you communicate with the students' teachers and parents following contact.

(i) Teachers

(ii) Parents

(g) What role do you play in referral of the student to the mainstream school, review of progress and team reporting?

(h) What is the reaction of students to your service?

(i) Describe the role and support for 3 students, their parents and teachers across Forms 4, 5, 6.

Student 1

Student 2

Student 3

2. **Making the role more effective**

(a) In what ways could the effectiveness of your support to students and teachers and parents be increased?

Students

Teachers

Parents

(b) What prevents you from increasing your effectiveness? Nos? Curriculum? School Population? Competency/Attitude of Staff? Organizational Problems? Regional Policy? Other?

3. **Support and Training for the Role**

What support do you receive in your role?

(i) From the organizing agency?

(ii) From the schools involved?

(b) What training have you received for your specific role?

(c) Do classroom teachers need any training to work with you?

3. Competencies required for Mainstream Teaching and Consultancy

(a) What are the competencies required for a classroom teacher to work successfully with a

(i) V.I. student

(ii) a consultant teacher

(b) What are the competencies required for the role of itinerant, adviser or visual resource teacher?

4. Social and Attitudinal aspects of Mainstream Placement

(a) Socially what do you consider the advantages of a student with a V.I. being placed in a mainstream setting with your type of assistance as opposed to the alternatives of _________ or _________?

(b) Socially what are the disadvantages of your service over the alternatives?

(c) Does your role extend to assisting schools in helping the V.I. student adjust to the social implications of his disability? How?

(d) Describe the attitudes of staff and students towards the V.I. students you teach.

(e) Do you work with staff and students in your role to help them understand the needs of the visually impaired student?

Withdrawal

(a) How do students react to withdrawal?

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(b) How do other students react to withdrawal?

(c) How does the classroom teacher react?

General comments

APPENDIX F SUBJECT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Respond to questions by ticking the appropriate box or writing in the space provided.
2. The boxes in the column on the right-hand side are for scoring purposes only. Do not write in the boxes.
3. Prior to answering the questions that relate to the student with a visual impairment, could you please fill out the background information section which will enable comparisons between teachers of different schools, age, sex and qualifications.
4. All information will be treated confidentially.

SECTION A

Background Information: Please tick the appropriate categories.

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1. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( ) ☐ 1
2. Age: Please indicate e.g. [3][6] ☐☐ ☐☐
3. Location of School: Auckland, Wanganui, Northland ☐
4. Please tick if your school:
   - (i) has a visual resource centre ( )
     or
   - (ii) is visited by an itinerant teacher from the Auckland Visual Resource Centre, Homai College ( )
     or
   - (iii) is visited by an adviser from the National Advisory Service, Homai College ( ) ☐
5. Please tick which of the following qualifications you hold:
   - Trained Teachers Certificate ( )
   - Diploma in Teaching ( )
   - University Degree ( )
   - Other (specify) ( )

____

____

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6. Please tick if you have any of the following special education qualifications.
   - Education of the Visually Handicapped Course ( ) ☐
   - Education of the Handicapped Children Course ( ) ☐
   - Education of the Deaf Course ( ) ☐
   - Other relevant courses e.g. (University or ASTU papers) (specify) ☐

____

____

7. Have you attended any relevant in-service courses for teaching the student with a visual impairment.

   Yes ( ) Date: 19
   No ( ) ☐ 10

   If yes, specify.

____

____

8. How many students with visual impairments have you taught? Please write number in box. ☐ ☐
9. How many years have you taught? Please write number in box. ☐ ☐
10. Please tick your official position at the school.
    - Principal ( ) ☐
    - Deputy Principal ( ) ☐
    - Senior Mistress/Master ( ) ☐
    - Dean ( ) ☐
    - Form Teacher ( ) ☐
    - Guidance Counsellor ( ) ☐
    - Other positions of responsibility ( ) ☐
    - Assistant Teacher ( ) ☐ 20

SECTION B

The Student: Listed below is the name of a 4th Form student with a visual impairment that you teach in your ____________ classes. In answering the questionnaire, please reply, unless stated otherwise, only in relation to that student in the stated subject area.

Student's Name ______________________________ Form IV

Subject Area ______________________________

Student Rating

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*1. Compared to the other students you teach in the same form please rate the above student's abilities in ____________________, by placing a tick in the appropriate box.

Name	Bottom 20%	Below average	Average	Above Average	Top 20%
1 ______________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Teaching Strategies

2. Does your subject area present any difficulties for teaching the above student with a visual impairment? Please tick only one category.

   Yes ( )
   No ( )

3. If yes please list difficulties below:

4. Do you modify your teaching style for this student? Please tick only one category.

   Yes ( )
   No ( )
   No, but desirable ( )
   Not necessary ( )

5. (If yes) how do you modify it? Please tick one or more categories.
   (1) Individualised instruction. ( )
   (2) Small group work. ( )
   (3) Use of a sighted buddy system. ( ) 30
   (4) Assistance out of class time. ( )
   (5) Give the student extra time in class to complete exercises. ( )
   (6) Use of specialised equipment. ( )
   (7) Use of brailled materials. ( )
   (8) Use of enlarged materials. ( )
   (9) Work with visual resource teacher in finding ways to explain materials and concepts. ( )
   (10) Other (please specify) ( )

* Indicates those questions used for the Visual Resource Study.

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6. Do you modify the curriculum content for this student? Please tick only one category.

   Yes ( )
   No ( ) 40
   No, but desirable ( )
   Not necessary ( )

7. (If yes) how do you modify it? Please tick one or more categories.
   (1) Omit areas that are too difficult for the student to cover because of lack of sight. ( )
   (2) Substitute areas to compensate for (1). ( )
   (3) Remedial exercises. ( )
   (4) Other (please describe) ( )

8. If you have answered 'No but desirable' to either questions 4 or 6 what are the reasons for lack of modification? Tick one or more categories.
   (1) Lack of time. ( )
   (2) Lack of training. ( )
   (3) Lack of resources. ( )
   (4) Student given assistance elsewhere. ( ) 50
   (5) Other (please describe) ( )

9. If you modify your approach how much extra time do you spend in preparing this student's programme? Tick only one category.

   much more ( )
   more ( )
   about the same ( )
   less ( )
   much less ( )

10. How do you cope with correction of work? Tick one or more categories.
   (1) student submits a typed copy ( )
   (2) visual resource teachers correct the brailled copy ( )
   (3) work remains uncorrected ( )
   (4) the same as the rest of the class ( )
   (5) other (specify) ( )

60

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11. In class presentation time do you spend more time with this visually impaired student relative to other students? Tick one category only.

much more	( )	☐
more	( )	
about the same	( )	
less	( )	
much less	( )	

Effects of a student with a visual impairment in the classroom.

*12. What are the effects on your stress level having this visually impaired student in your class sessions? Tick one category only.

marked increase in stress	( )	☐
an increase	( )	
small increase	( )	
negligible	( )	

13. What are the effects on other class members of having this visually impaired student in their class session? Tick one category only.

all favourable	( )	☐
mostly favourable	( )	
about evenly divided	( )	
mostly unfavourable	( )	
all unfavourable	( )	
neutral	( )	

Resource People

*14. If any of the following people assist you in teaching this student with a visual impairment, please tick their categories in Box A.

	Box A	**Box B**	**Box C**	A	B	C
(1) Dean	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
(2) Form Teacher	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
*(3) The Advisory Teacher for the Visually Impaired Student	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
(4) Educ. Dept. Psychologist	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
(5) School Guidance Counsellor	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
(6) Parent	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
(7) Social Worker	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐
(8) Other please specify	( )	( )	( )	☐	☐	☐

70

____

____

*Visual Resource Teacher or Itinerant Teacher were substituted for Advisory Teacher depending upon the service that the school received.

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*15. Indicate how often you gain assistance from these resource people by placing one of the following numerals in the appropriate Box B categories.

1 = daily
2 = weekly
3 = fortnightly
4 = monthly
5 = once a term or less

*16. Indicate if you would like more assistance from any of the above resource people by placing one of the following numerals in Box C.

1 = would like more assistance
2 = no more assistance required

Equipment

17. Is specialised equipment or materials available for use by this visually impaired student in your sessions? Tick only one category.

Yes	( )	☐
No	( )	
Not necessary	( )	
No but desirable	( )	

(If yes) please check if this student uses any of the following in your sessions. Check also what would be desirable if available.

	Uses	**Desirable but not in use**		
1. Perkins Brailler	( )	( )	☐	☐
2. Magnifiers	( )	( )	☐	☐
3. Personal Miniscope	( )	( )	☐	☐
4. Brailled texts	( )	( )	☐	☐
5. Brailled reference books	( )	( )	☐	☐
6. Brailled handouts and class notes	( )	( )	☐	☐
7. Brailled tests	( )	( )	☐	☐
8. Enlarged print texts	( )	( )	☐	☐
9. Enlarged reference books	( )	( )	☐	☐
10. Enlarged handouts and class notes	( )	( )	☐	☐
11. Enlarged tests	( )	( )	☐	☐
12. Cassette recorder and player	( )	( )	☐	☐
13. Talking calculator	( )	( )	☐	☐
14. Raised maps	( )	( )	☐	☐
15. Braille and print machine that produces a braille and print copy simultaneously	( )	( )	☐	☐
16. Other (please specify)	( )	( )	☐	☐

**The Advisory Teacher for the Visually Impaired Student

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*18. How does the advisory teacher assist you in relation to this particular student?

☐☐☐☐

*19. Would you like any other assistance from the advisory teachers in relation to this student? Tick only one category.

Yes ( )

No ( )

☐

If yes, please describe.

☐☐☐☐ 100

*20. Would you like any in-service training for working with the advisory teacher? Tick only one category.

Yes ( )

No ( )

☐

If yes, please describe.

☐☐☐☐

*21. Are there any ways in which your effectiveness in working with the advisory teacher could be increased? Please describe.

☐☐☐☐

**Visual Resource Teacher or Itinerant Teacher were substituted for Advisory Teacher where applicable.

In-service Training

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*22. If training in teaching techniques for your subject area was available for teaching visually impaired students list in order of preference from 1 to 4 the type most suitable for you.

(1) On-the-job training ( )

(2) School release seminar ( )

(3) Visits to watch and talk with competent teachers of the visually impaired ( )

(4) A year's full-time study on all aspects of teaching the visually impaired ( )

☐☐☐☐

The Future

*23. If asked in the future to teach a visually impaired student how favourable are you to the option? Tick only one category.

Very favourable ( )

Favourable ( )

Neutral ( )

Not favourable ( )

Most unfavourable ( )

☐

As a teacher what are your greatest concerns in teaching a student with a visual impairment? Please describe.

☐☐☐☐ 110

*24. Any further comment

☐☐☐☐

APPENDIX G PARENTS of VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

SUPPORTED BY R.N.Z.F.B.

CASE FOR A VISUAL RESOURCE CENTRE IN THE MANAWATU

Palmerston North is an ideal geographically central location for the siting of a Visual Resource Centre to service the wider area encompassing Taranaki, Wanganui Hawkes Bay and the Manawatu.

There are approximately 35 pupils registered with the RNZFB mainstreamed in the Manawatu area - with additional pupils in Taranaki, Wanganui and Hawkes Bay. These pupils range from Pre-school to University level, with a wide range of disability.

One family has provided their own teacher's aid so that their son can be "mainstreamed" into a local school.

A Visual Resource Centre with itinerant teachers would give support to teachers who have visually impaired pupils in their classes. Teachers and pupils in this area have suffered the frustrations of having one or two visits a year from itinerant teachers based in Auckland, which does not solve difficulties as they arise.
An itinerant service by correspondence causes delays and misunderstandings about problems, resulting in pupils experiencing a lack of success in education skills (especially reading and comprehension) because of a physical inability to keep up with their fellow pupils.

Proximity to the Low Vision Clinic at Palmerston North Public Hospital could help with liason in the wider area as most of the children from the Hawkes Bay, Wanganui and Taranaki areas attend the Clinic at least once a year. This would give the opportunity to call at the Visual Resource Centre while visiting Palmerston North in addition to visits from an itinerant teachers.

Massey University is running a course on Social Work which could benefit from liason with and observation of a Visual Resource Centre. Further courses could be developed through the university's Education Faculty and the Palmerston North Teachers College if the facility was available to assist courses in Special Education.

The advantages of decreasing the time spent in travel from Auckland to the Central Districts would result in more time being spent with pupils, and after the initial cost of setting up a centre, should result in better returns for financial investment.

Some of the needs to be considered include:

Pre - need planning for assistance to teachers and pupils before difficulties arise, so that teachers and pupils have an immediate "back - up" when a crisis point is reached.

Production of a plan of action/campaign to achieve the pupil's full potential thus minimising "drop-outs" from the school system.

Advice on the choice of a secondary school best suited to a pupil's needs.

Advice on the most suitable courses at pre-enrolement time to minimise problems that arise from attempting unsuitable courses.

Early planning to provide opportunities for each pupil to make the best use of their individual abilities.

Support for the Teachers of these pupils. Most teachers already have classes of 30+ pupils and have to provide in some cases, specially adapted lessons for visually impaired pupils, with little or no additional assistance.

The setting-up of a Visual Resource Centre in Palmerston North would also improve the educational opportunities for pupils with visual-impairments who are just above the cut-off level for RNZFB enrolement. The experience of the Deanwell Visual Resource Centre - Hamilton has shown that there are many more pupils in need of assistance, than was originally indicated by R.N.Z.F.B rolls.

APPENDIX H PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VISUAL RESOURCE CENTRE IN PALMERSTON NORTH

Proposal

That a Visual Resource Centre be established at Palmerston North to provide service to visually impaired students in the Wanganui, Taranaki and Hawkes Bay Education Board regions.

That the structure of the service comprise the Centre base at Palmerston North wih outpost positions in New Plymouth and Napier.

Background

Currently support to visually impaired students is provided by the National Advisory Service, Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, which is based at Homai College, Manurewa, Auckland. This service is extended to students registered with the R.N.Z.F.B. in those areas of New Zealand where a visual resource centre has not been previously established.

The staff:pupil ratio for these areas is as follows -

Early Childhood (0-8 yrs) - 1:100 nationwide
School Age Students - 1:70

The current provision enables these students to receive two advisory visits annually. Recognition of the need for further student support is widespread in Homai College. At the Visual Resource Centres National Seminar held at Homai College in September 1986, the establishment of further visual resource centres was strongly supported. The Homai College Review Document also addresses this issue.

Educational distribution of students residing within the 3 Board areas as at December 1986 is -

	Pre-School	Primary	Secondary	Special/ IHC	Tertiary	Homai	Total
Wanganui Ed Board	9	10	8	5	3	4	39
Taranaki Ed Board	4	7	5	3	-	3	27
Hawkes Bay Ed Board	8	10	3	2	-	4	27
TOTAL	21	27	16	10	3	16	93

(Refer to attached lists for detailed information)

These figures represent only those students who are registered with the R.N.Z.F.B. Students who are referred to the Advisory Service as requiring additional support but do not meet the criteria for registration are not included.

The Visual Resource Centre

To meet the needs of all visually impaired students in the Wanganui, Taranaki and Hawkes Bay Education Board regions, it is proposed that a Visual Resource Centre be established in Palmerston North with consideration being given to its location at Central Normal Primary School with two outpost positions being located in New Plymouth and Napier.

It is recommended that staffing of the Visual Resource Centre include -

I) Four teachers.
  (a) 1 Senior Teacher - Scale G2 — to be based at Palmerston North
      1 Teacher
  (b) Outpost Teachers:
      1 Teacher based at New Plymouth
      1 Teacher based at Napier.

Implications in the appointment of staff.
Recognised qualifications in the education of the visually impaired and ensuring that staff are able to offer expertise in the following areas - Early childhood development, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.

II) An Orientation and Mobility Instructor - 37 1/2 hours

III) Ancillary staffing -
  (a) 1 Teachers Aide - 25 hours
  (b) 1 Braille Transcriber - 25 hours
  (c) 1 Full-time Clerical Assistant

The siting of the Visual Resource Centre at Palmerston North would be aimed at a location geographically central to those areas requiring further service provision. This is also the most central location in terms of the greatest density of population of all those children requiring extra support.

Other factors in support of this location include close proximity to the Low Vision Aid Clinic, Palmerston North Public Hospital, Palmerston North Teachers College and Massey University with its recent developments in the commencement of the Diploma in Habilitation Studies course in 1987.

Parent support for this proposal has been such that submissions have been made to the Homai College Review and a written submission for the establishment of a Visual Resource Centre in Manawatu has been drafted by the Parents of the Visually Handicapped group, Palmerston North. A copy of this statement is available from the Co-ordinator, Mrs G Hewetson, 21 Terry Crescent, Palmerston North. In a recent meeting of the National Parents of the Visually Handicapped Committee strong support for this proposal was expressed by all in attendance.

Costing

It is recommended that the Palmerston North Visual Resource Centre be established on the same basis as existing visual resource centres that is, G2 school status with the corresponding allocation of basic equipment.

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Estimated expenditure for the following are outlined in Appendix II:

- Modificaton of buildings
- Salaries
- Travel costs
- Basic equipment as allocated for a G2 school
- Specialist equipment.

Recommendation

That the establishment of a Visual Resource Centre at Palmerston North with outposts at New Plymouth and Napier be given urgent consideration.

Owen Nagel
Owen Nagel
NATIONAL ADVISER FOR THE V/H

L. Bruce Gibbs
L Bruce Gibbs
PRINCIPAL